

Rahn's Union Sabbath School.

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Walter Henry

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1 This is a good
book it is called
1 The cash boys
trust

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THE
CASH-BOY'S TRUST.

BY
ANNE M. MITCHELL.

‘ And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him
in the midst of them.’



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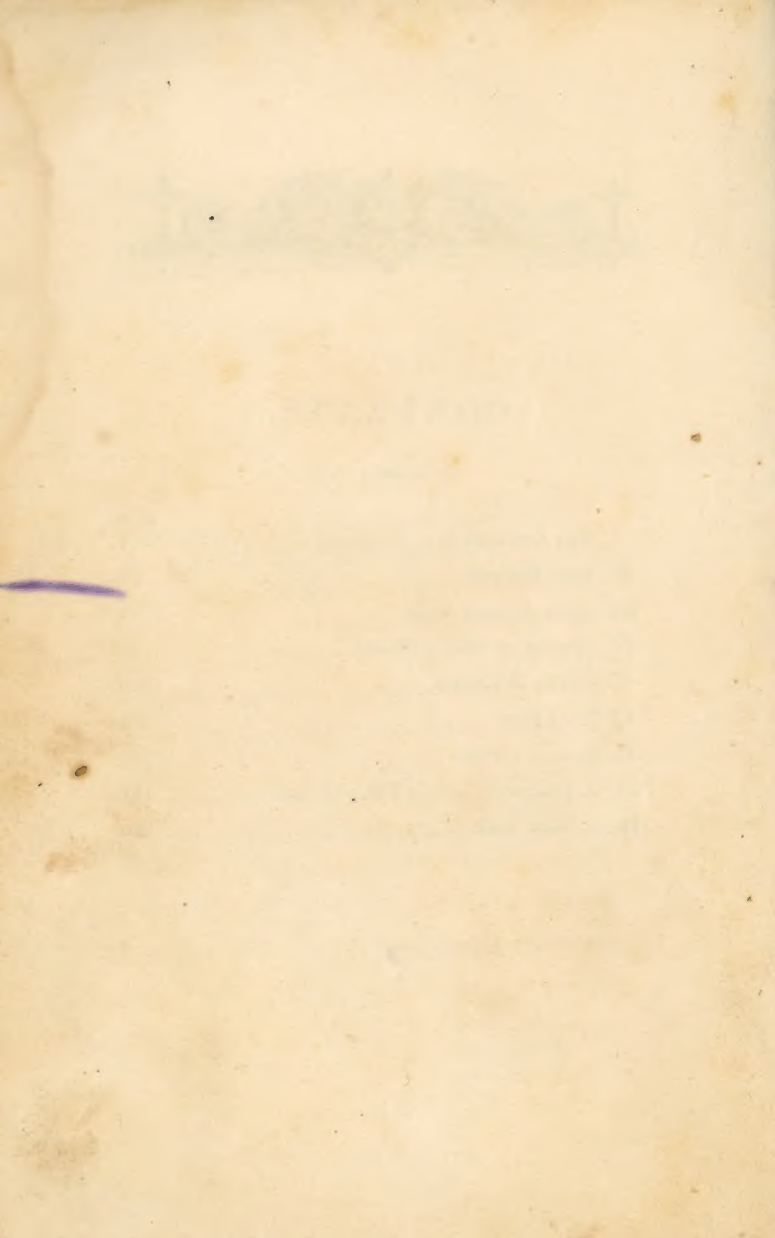
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THE CASH-BOY'S TRUST.



I.

The Orphans.

"There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair."

TWO children, a boy and a girl, sat in a low-roofed room at the top of one of the smallest houses in Richmond-street, one afternoon in May, doing nothing, and looking very grave. They were dressed neatly, the one in a suit of coarse gray material, the other in a light calico frock. The little girl had a narrow black ribbon tied round her throat, as a badge of mourning, for the two



had but just returned from the funeral of their father.

Neither brother nor sister appeared like mourners, for they were not so. The mother, whose death was far more real to the children than this last one, had been gone now six months. Life had not been pleasant to them since then. The father was not often at home, and when he came was wished away ; although he always brought money, which paid for their little room and their meals, and sometimes gave them new clothing. But he was not himself when he came, and carried a large black bottle constantly ; so that the children learned to dread his coming home.

Eddie was cash-boy in a large dry-goods store, and when the father was with them he always left his sister very reluctantly in the morning, and hurried back at night.

Finally the father came home for the last



time, lay down on the bed, and never rose again. The two children were his nurses and constant attendants; and at length, when the long illness ended in death, it was the son who closed the eyes of his father, and the daughter who shed the few tears, more in awe than in grief.

Minnie swept the carpetless room and blacked the stove as well as her little hands were capable of doing, while Eddie went to the Guardians of the Poor to ask for a burial.

So, at length, quietly and decently, the body of the worn-out wicked man was laid in the ground, and the two children were left alone.

They had been sitting in almost unchangeable attitudes since they came back from the cemetery; Eddie with his head leaning on his hand by one window, and Minnie near him, watching the black ribbon, with which the shutter was fastened, flap to and fro in the soft



May air. They had nothing to say to each other. Eddie was trying to realize for the first time what a weight his young mind had to carry, and he looked down into the face of his little sister, sweet, winning, sober with trouble beyond any child of her years, and wondered whether he should be able to guide and direct her. He remembered that he must leave her while he was at work, and thought of the care she would want in vain. The quarrelsome voices of the children in the little street below floated up to him, and he dreaded for her to be among them. The old, old wish came at last, as it always did in the end, whenever either of these children thought, "Oh, I wish mother would come back!" and then, as the next best thing, he looked at his little sister, whose face was so like her mother's. What he saw when he looked, was a big tear running slowly down her pale cheek, and he felt for the first time

that he must be her comforter, for she had no one else. "Minnie," he asked, "what are you crying for?" It seemed so impossible to him that she could be crying for her dead father.

"I was wondering, Eddie, what we shall do if Mrs. Wood turns us out of the house?"

Eddie had not thought of that, and it frightened him. He did not say so, for his heart told him Minnie must not know it, so he said quietly: "We would go somewhere else."

"But we are very poor now, Eddie."

"Yes, but I earn money enough to keep us both in bread and milk, and we'll see about the rest. Don't you feel like some supper now? Come, I'll help you set the table, and afterwards we'll go and have a talk with Mrs. Wood."

The little girl was satisfied, and rose evidently glad to have something to do. She gave a little sigh of relief as if Eddie had taken



all the care away, which he hearing, felt the double weight resting on his own heart.

Minnie set the table, and when she and Eddie faced each other on either side of it, with each a bowl of bread and milk—city milk though it was—things looked very much brighter. Indeed, before the bottom of either bowl was reached, they were talking together quite fast, and I think if the mother gone before looked down upon them, she was glad that all the future was hidden.

They went down-stairs after a little, and opened Mrs. Wood's door. It would have been no use to knock, for the six children, Jo, Tom, Sis, Mary, Sallie, and Jake Wood were in the midst of a most exciting representation of a circus, endeavoring to represent at least twenty animals, so that stillness was out of the question.

Rough-and-tumble Mrs. Wood, when she



saw these two grave faces coming into her laughing happy group, was touched. She had not much time to be touched, this busy woman, but she hastily cleared a chair for Minnie, and asked her "if she felt better," and "if she would like to see the children play." The smallest of Mrs. Wood's flock were very fond of Minnie, and so when she came in, forgetting that they were tigers and lions, they ran toward her. Suddenly Jake stopped, and reaching out with a grasp at Sallie's hair, brought her to a stand still, very suddenly indeed.

"What's the row, you, Jake?" she asked, shaking herself loose, and turning towards him.

"Hush! Don't you see Minnie's black ribbon? That's 'cause her father's dead. Maybe she don't want to talk."

Minnie heard and understood. She sat undecided for a moment, and then untied the



bow, and rolling up the black ribbon neatly, put it in her pocket.

“Sallie and Jake,” she said, “I will tell you a little story while Eddie is talking. Come!”

They needed no second invitation, and the little girl, putting away her trouble as she had put away her ribbon, told them about a beautiful fairy who lived in a great red rose.

Meanwhile the brother was standing by the table where Mrs. Wood was washing dishes, and telling her in a slow grave way how their affairs stood.

“I earn three dollars a week in the store, Mrs. Wood,” he said, “and I am willing to pay you the whole if you will have a little care of my sister, and let us keep the room and board with you. I have only breakfast and supper at home, you know.”

Mrs. Wood had a heart, but she had also



six mouths to fill and six pairs of feet to fit with shoes, so that an extra dollar in room rent made a real difference. Wiping a plate deliberately, she said: "It isn't very large pay Eddie, and you've left nothing out for clothes."

"True, ma'am, but we must look to God for clothes. For you, you have our furniture if at any time the money should not come; but I promise it to you faithfully every Saturday night."

He talked like a man, this boy of fourteen, with a man's weight of care on his face.

Mrs. Wood did not know what to say, and was restless under the beseeching eyes. Just then Jo and Sis, who had retired to a corner, tired of their rough play, raised their voices so that they reached the mother's ears.

"I say, Sis, what's an orphan? Ed and Min are orphans, ma says."

"So you don't know much if you don't



know what an orphan is. It's somebody that ain't got no friends and goes bad quick."

Eddie's face flushed, and the two listeners both looked toward Minnie, who, with an arm round each of the little ones, was saying earnestly, "but the worst of it was, the little girl had nobody to love her."

"You may stay, Eddie, and pay me your store money;" said Mrs. Wood, biting her lips: and seizing a pile of plates she made quick strides across the room to the cupboard. When she returned Eddie still stood as she had left him.

"Have you and Minnie had any supper?" she asked.

"Yes 'm; and, Mrs. Wood, I think that God will make up to you whatever I fail to give you." He spoke slowly, to prevent his voice from trembling, and after a moment's pause, added:

"Whenever you want anything done which

either I or my sister can do, we will be very glad to serve you."

It was no wonder the little girl answered his call so promptly, and went up-stairs after him so lovingly. She felt that he was going to care for her, and when he told her that they were to stay there, she replied: "I knew you would find some way. What am I to do?"

"You are to be a nice little house-maid, keep the room clean and neat as if mother were here, read a little lesson in your spelling-book every day, do whatever Mrs. Wood wishes, and never play with the children on the street. Can you do all this?" he asked, fondly.

"Yes, indeed, and I will, if it pleases you, Eddie. Won't you tell me a story before I go to bed, as mother used to do? I feel lonesome, as I did after she died."

He must be father and mother both, then! Work for her and love her, teach her and make



life child-like for her, no matter what became of his boyhood. He did not think this; he only felt how hard it would be to bring back the mother days, and then, with the little curly head resting on his knee, as Minnie sat on a little stool at his feet, he brushed the curls back with his hand and told her the never tiresome, ever beautiful story of little Samuel, and she listened to it with the same interest which we always pay, no matter if we know it all by heart.

“Mamma told me that story,” said Eddie, as he closed, “and she said that if we listened when God spoke to us in our hearts, and told us not to do a wrong thing, that God would be with us as he was with little Samuel. Now, Minnie, it is time for you to go to sleep.”

So the little girl went away to the tiny closet where she slept (it was too small to be called a room) and the boy rested in the bed where

the body of the father had laid. They both repeated a little prayer taught them by the mother, who had learned in her trouble to lean upon an Almighty arm, and then fell asleep, as the birds do, leaving the care of themselves to Him who is so strong to shelter the weak.

The mother whom they mourned had come into the city years ago, holding by the hand her little boy of five years, and carrying in her arms the unconscious daughter. She and her husband had formed bright plans when they left their quiet country home and sought the city. But they faded only too quickly, and a few years found the young countryman a gambler and a drunkard, doing nothing, and leaving his wife to earn the daily bread, and teach the two children. God had given her to love and trust Him who would take the place of the father who was lost to them. She struggled on until her hands dropped powerless, and then died



leaving her little ones in the arms of an all-pitying Saviour.

When Eddie opened the store door the next morning after the funeral, he carried a sober face under his straw hat, banded with black. The busy cashier only gave him half a glance when he reported himself at the desk.

“Ah! Been absent, did you say?”

“Yes, sir, I was excused yesterday by Mr. Dates.”

“Hem! Very well. Don’t ask for a holiday soon again.”

Eddie said, “No sir,” with the thought of how little likely he would be to want such another soon, and then went back to hang up his hat.

He was cash-boy number four, that is, belonging to counter number four, from which he was expected to collect the money.

He found cash-boy number five, Willie

—○○○—
Gale, seated on an empty dry-goods box, eating sugar.

“How are you, Eddie?” he said; “have some sugar? You had better take a lump, for old Jenkins isn’t any too sweet to-day.”

“Old Jenkins” meant politely the young lady at counter number four.

“No, thank you,” returned Eddie, smiling; “who took my place yesterday?”

“I did; but Jenkins does not take to me. What made you stay away?”

“My father was buried yesterday.”

“Your father!” exclaimed the boy. And then, after a startled pause, he asked, “Who have you got to take care of you now?”

“God will, I hope: for my sister and I have only each other.”

“You don’t say so!” said Willie, compassionately. “Well, now, I think God *will* help you,



for He is sorry for people in trouble. I only wish I could do something."

This was said with all earnestness, and the sugar offered again. But it was refused, and just then the bell struck for number four, and Eddie ran down the long room to the counter for the money from which he was to procure change.

Willie Gale sat swinging his feet in a thoughtful mood, and munching sugar, until being called himself, he jumped down and ran away. By and by, after he had answered the call, he came and leaned over counter number four. Eddie was away at the farther end of the store.

"Miss Jenkins," he asked, timidly, "may I speak to you a moment?"

"Is that you, number five?" replied the young lady, hastily. "I beg you won't trouble me; I had enough of you yesterday. Go

—o—o—o—
away to your own counter. Eddie has come back.”

“I know it, Miss Jenkins, but I want to say something to you, if you please.”

“Well, be in a hurry, then. I’ve no time to waste.”

He came round behind the counter, and commenced to talk very earnestly. The lady only half listened at first, but she soon gave her whole attention. “Poor little boy!” she said, as he finished. “I’m much obliged to you for telling me. Run away now, for I’ve got a customer waiting.”

Miss Jenkins was too busy to waste words, but she did not forget what she had heard; and when Eddie came for the customer’s bill, he was met by a smile and a gentle word from the sharp Miss Jenkins, which cheered him more than she knew. She saw his face light up, however, and although she had several



things to try her during the morning, she always softened her hard tone to her cash-boy, and made his day very much more pleasant by so doing.

At noon time, when Willie Gale came to a dry-goods box with his dinner nicely tied up in a napkin, and began to spread it out on his impromptu table, he found Eddie standing near, looking out of the window, which gave a view of three or four yards of dry earth, enclosed by four brick walls. Eddie was gazing intently.

"Fine view, you have. Any new flowers out?" asked Willie, taking a bite of his bread and butter.

Eddie turned round with a laugh. "I wasn't looking at it," he said.

"Isn't it your dinner time?" asked Willie, after another satisfactory bite.

"I haven't any with me."



“Go and buy some, then; you will not have another chance, and there ain’t many in now.”

“No, I haven’t any morey.”

“That’s a fib! Where’s your wages?”

“You forget, I have to pay board for Minnie and myself.”

“Does it take all the money?”

“Yes.”

“Do you expect to live on two meals a day?”

“I guess so.”

The bread and butter claimed attention for a few minutes, and then he asked again, suddenly: “What are you going to do when your clothes wear out?”

“I don’t know.”

The last reply was not given as if the speaker was at all fearful about the future. Willie glanced round to make sure that he had heard the tone aright, and then resumed his meal.



Finally he left his seat, and with both hands in his pockets, sauntered leisurely away. As he passed Eddie, still standing by the window, he said carelessly, "There are two slices of bread and butter on my napkin, if you want them. They are good, I promise you, for my aunt Addie made the bread."

This was all. He did not say that he had not enjoyed a full meal, and could easily have eaten the two remaining slices; nor did he say that he had saved the best for his friend. He knew in either case that Eddie would not have touched it: but as it was, supposing the slices left over would be thrown aside, Eddie ate them hungrily, and then, as his only means of thanking the giver, folded the napkin carefully, and laid it in the little pink and white basket from which it had been taken.

He was not unmindful of the kindness shown him in more than one direction that day. All



with whom he had dealings in the store seemed to know of his trouble, and to smooth the way for him. Miss Jenkins did not scold when he dropped the piece of muslin which he was helping her fold, and the cashier came the whole length of the store to help him lift the shutters into their places. The cash-boys all bade him "good night" when he took his hat to go, and Willie Gale, tired as he was, walked part of the way home with him. Somehow Eddie knew that his easy day had been partly owing to his friend; but he could not thank him, although he tried.

"Never mind," interrupted Willie. "I am coming to see you some-day."

"We live in a very poor place," said Eddie, "I don't believe you would like to come."

"That will make no difference," replied Willie, "I am coming to see you, not the place. Good night."



Even with all this to comfort him, I do not think it was strange that he gave a little sigh as he turned away from the wide street towards his home. The day was warm, and he was very tired. It had been one of the busiest days of the whole season, and the cash-boys had plenty to do. The future would look out at him from every corner, and his sister's face was ever before him. He seemed almost unable to bear the weight which, boy as he was, he felt resting upon him.

It *was* cheering to lift his eyes amid these desponding thoughts, and see Minnie running towards him with her curls flying in the wind, and her face lighted with the sunniest kind of welcome

“Oh, Eddie, I'm glad you've got home!” she said, seizing his hand, and swinging it between them as they walked. “I've fixed up the room, read my lesson, minded Mrs. Wood's

—○○○—
baby, and then, last of all, I put on a clean apron, and have been sitting on the steps watching for you ever so long.”

His heart grew lighter as she led him up the stairs in her laughing, happy mood. She showed him, after they had eaten supper, the different things she had done, swept the room, made the beds, dusted and drawn the shutters together, that the room might be kept cool.

Eddie, pleased with her pretty, housewifely airs, praised her very much, and told her all about his busy day and his dinner, which Willie had given him; and finally, to amuse her, about a little girl whom he had seen come into the store with her mother, how pretty she was, and that he hoped his little sister Minnie might one day be like her.

“Had she black eyes?” asked Minnie.

“Yes, I believe she had.”

“And was she with her mamma?”



“Yes.”

“Had she red shoes?” she asked again, after a moment.

“Yes, dear.”

“And was she with her mamma?”

“Yes, dear; why do you ask again?”

“Tell me, please, was her mamma kind to her?”

“Yes, and told her she might choose a pair of little kid gloves for herself. Why do you ask?”

“Oh!” replied Minnie, with a deep sigh, “I thought perhaps some day I might be like her, but I never can. I have black eyes, and might have a red dress, with shoes to match. I might even have a pair of kid gloves, but I can never, never have a dear mamma to give them to me, and to be kind to me afterwards. I was so lonesome this morning after you went away, Eddie.”



Her voice broke here, and she sobbed a moment. How still the room was! The clock ticked on the mantel, and the muffled voices of the children below reached them, like an echo. Yet the two were still—brother and sister each striving to bear this burden. Eddie seemed to know fully now that Minnie had suffered with him. They had both longed for some one on whom to lean, and both hearts had ached in silence. It was hard to bear, but they had both borne it all day long, and now struggled on together.

Finally Eddie roused himself. “Mother would not want us to mourn so, Minnie,” he said. “We will be a comfort to each other.”

He talked cheerfully to her, until the little sobbing breath grew longer, and she fell asleep where she sat, on a stool, with her head against the window-sill. He took her up gently and laid her in her own little bed, and then



came back and sat by the open window an hour or more, almost motionless, and with a face pitiful in its sorrow and loneliness.

There was only One who saw, and He looked very tenderly upon them, and remembered their sorrow and trouble. His hand led them, though they knew it not; and if the Land of Beulah was before them, hidden from their view by clouds, the rays of the Sun of Righteousness could scatter them.





II.

New Friends.

“Thus to learn, with pure endeavor,
Good to do, and nothing say.”

IT seemed as if Willie Gale's face had caught part of the shadow that had fallen upon Eddie, for he walked away with his eyes bent upon the ground. It was a long distance to his home, through many squares, so that when he reached it half the length of the city was between himself and Eddie's little corner. It was in a very different location, too: Willie lived with his two maiden aunts, in a quiet by-street on the edge of the great bustling city, and in a little brown



cottage which stood just far enough back from the road to allow a tiny garden in front, where there bloomed flowers, from the first crocus of Spring to the latest crysanthemum of Autumn. There were roses there on the night in May of which I am telling you, and when Willie opened the gate, his "young auntie," as he called her, was just finishing the evening watering.

She waited for him to come up, and they went together into the fresh, pretty room where the supper was spread and waiting for the little cash-boy.

"Old auntie" was there to take off Willie's cap, smooth his hair with her hand, and ask him if he was very tired this warm day. Then they all sat down to supper. Mrs. Gale had not sent the oldest of her six children into the city without a struggle. But the two "aunties" had offered him a home, and he could earn

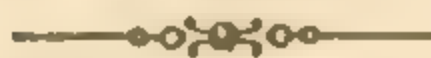


enough to clothe himself: besides, the farm produced barely sufficient for the growing family, and Willie could best be spared. It seemed like taking the sunlight out of the house to let him go, but finally it was accomplished; and though the merry voice was sorely missed at first, in time the mother learned to look for his cheery letters, and forget the rest.

Willie missed his mother, too; but the two aunties were very fond of him, and made his city home so pleasant that he soon lost his home-sickness.

They sat now, one at either end of the little tea-table, with their charge between them "Old auntie"—aunt Martha—with her hands busy pouring out tea, and "young auntie," aunt Addie, dishing out strawberries and pouring country cream over them.

"This is some of your mother's cream, Wil-



lie," she said ; "it came this morning with her letter. One of the farmers left them both as he passed by on his way to market."

"It seems to me that I should only have to taste it to know that it was mother's cream," replied Willie, smiling.

"Has it been a hard day in the store, Willie?" asked the other auntie from behind the tea-tray.

"Rather, aunt Martha, but I forget it all when I come home. I only wish all the boys could say so."

"Have they not all pleasant homes?"

"I am afraid not, aunt Martha."

Aunt Addie was just about to speak, when a ring at the bell called her away to the door, and presently aunt Martha, finding she remained away, and concluding she was entertaining a caller, went to see who it was.

Willie finished his strawberries, and then



left the table and sat down on a low step which led out from the window upon a short piazza at the back of the house.

By and by he heard one of the aunties clearing away the remains of the supper, and the other auntie rattling the dishes in the kitchen. Then it was quiet again, save the sweet home voices faintly heard from the next room, and Willie sat very still in the beautiful summer twilight, looking out towards the west. Finally, however, he heard a step near him, and aunt Addie came and sat down beside him, putting her arm around him.

“What have you been thinking of, that you are so grave, Willie?” she asked.

He looked up into the sweet face and told her. Willie told this auntie what he would have told to no one else in the world.

“I would like very much to be a man, aunt Addie.”



Aunt Addie laughed softly, and very merrily. Willie looked up surprised.

“I beg your pardon, Willie,” she said, “but I was thinking that it was not *very* strange that a boy just in his teens should sit in the twilight and wish to be a man.”

“But, aunt Addie, I did not wish it then as I often do. I don’t want to be rich and great; I want to be able to help people who ain’t so happy as I am.”

“My dear Willie, we can always do that,” said aunt Addie, gravely.

“Not always, I think, auntie. It isn’t much a little boy can do.”

“Sometimes a little boy can do far more than you imagine. What have you seen which gave you such thoughts?”

“There is a cash-boy, auntie, who waits upon the counter next to mine, who is in trouble. He has lost his mother, and now his father,



and is left with a little sister to care for. He was going without his dinner to-day, if somebody had not given him some ; he looked very sad, and when I offered to come and see him, he said it was too poor a place to visit."

"Where did he say it was?"

"Richmond-street. Do you know where that is, auntie?"

"Yes, dear. I know. Poor children! I think, Willie," she continued, after a pause, "that if you and I put our heads together we can help them very much."

"Do you, indeed!" answered Willie, twisting himself round to look up into her face. "What shall we do?"

"I will tell you what you must do first, and I will find out the rest. When you see Eddie grave you must try and cheer him, and when you find him tired and unable to do his work, do part of it yourself. Always give him part



of your dinner. I will see that you have enough and for the rest, ask God to teach you to do the best thing in the best way."

"I will," replied Willie, earnestly, "and I think He will too; for when I asked him who was going to take care of him, he said, "God will, I hope."

Just then the other auntie called, and they both went in. If Willie's eyes were brighter than before, or his smile more ready, it was because when God gives us work to do for others it is so much His work that it brings us nearer Him, and so makes us happier.

Willie was very much surprised the next morning, in one of his journeys round the store, to see his aunt Addie sitting at counter number four, trying on a pair of gloves. He ran up to her immediately.

"You did not tell me you were coming down this morning, aunt Addie," he said.

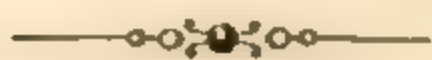


“I found I wanted a pair of gloves,” she replied; “and, by the way, if your friend you spoke of yesterday is not busy, won’t you bring him here, and make us known to each other?”

“When he comes for your money, I’ll come with him,” replied Willie; and ran off in search of him.

So when Miss Jenkins rang her bell, both boys came, and Willie, presenting his friend, said, “Eddie, this is my aunt Addie. She wants to know about your sister.” “Miss Jenkins,” he added, turning to that lady, “please let me take the money for Eddie.”

The money was given, and Willie ran off while in answer to Miss Gale’s polite words, Eddie told her gravely about his sister, but at the same time he spoke of her so tenderly, and seemed so full of care, that the lady was quite touched.



“Willie tells me your sister is very much alone, as you have to be away so much, and I thought I would ask if you thought she would like to have me come and see her.”

“She would be very glad to see you, ma’am,” replied Eddie, flushing with pleasure. “We are very poor, but if you find anything amiss, I know you will remember that Minnie and I have no one to set things straight for us.”

“I know all about it, Eddie,” replied the lady, gently. “Tell your sister that if it is pleasant to-morrow morning I will come down and see her, about eleven o’clock.”

This was said because the kind, thoughtful heart did not wish to make the child nervous with the constant expectation of her arrival, and because she saw that Eddie wished to make his poor home as pleasant as possible, in honor of her visit.

Willie followed aunt Addie to the store



door, with a very happy step. "How kind in you to think of it, auntie," he said; "and how glad Eddie looked! I'll try to do my part."

Eddie was more secretly joyful than even his friend knew. "If only," he thought, "this lady will be a friend to Minnie, how grand it will be for her, and how much better care than mine she would have."

If Miss Addie had heard the description which Eddie gave of her that night to Minnie, I think she would scarcely have recognized herself. Minnie sat wrapt over a description of a young lady with soft white hands, lovely blue eyes, and a sweet smiling mouth, who wore rosebuds in her bonnet, and asked after Minnie so kindly.

Eddie hoped his little sister might arrange the room in the best manner the next day, and make herself neat and clean to receive her visitor. He told her how she must speak,



almost what she must say, and particularly if Miss Gales should speak of coming again, to tell her how gladly she would be welcomed. "If she asks about mother," concluded the boy, "be sure and tell her how good she was ; that we learned all we know from her ; and show her mother's picture."

This one bright spot in their lives held them away from utter wretchedness. Who can tell what they might have been without it !

Perhaps the next day was one of the longest and most impatient, Eddie ever passed. Willie came running to him as soon as he reached the store. "Aunt Addie liked you so much, Eddie," he said, eagerly, "that she hopes we will always be friends, and help each other, whenever we can."

"You help me more than I can tell," said Eddie, in reply, "but I cannot help you much I wish I could."



“You help me a great deal,” said Willie, “for you are gentle and good, while I am full of fun and frolic. You know better than I can tell you, how many scoldings you have saved me, but you do not know how many times your patient face has kept me from hasty words and wrong-doing.”

This was very strange talk for two boys, perhaps you think? They spoke thus, standing at the back-counter, just before the day's work began, and then separated to fulfil their duties. When they met at noon they had a rough game of ball in the little cage of a yard, and a lunch shared between them, because “Aunt Addie said so.” It was well laughed over, for it was eaten in a great hurry, and Willie being obliged to jump off the empty dry-goods box which he called his table to attend to his call, dropped his bread and butter in among a heap of waste papers.



The two had a merry time hunting for it, and afterwards, they fed it to a frolicksome kitten who was a great pet with Eddie and Willie, and who always came and went in the store of her own free-will. Later in the afternoon, "between while," they had a game of checkers on the old checkerboard the cashier had given them, and robed a ribbon-ball between them for kitty's benefit. No more talk over the subject of the morning, no mention, scarcely a thought of it, and yet it was good to know that underneath the fun and frolic, the games and the weary feet, there were good true hearts beating and each was trying to help the other in his own hearty brave boy-fashion.

The day was a weary one, and very long to Eddie; but, notwithstanding this, his feet lost no time going home or in climbing the stairs when he reached there. Minnie sat in her

—○○○○—
little chair waiting for him, impatiently, and the visitor's presence lingered in a dish of roses standing on the table.

"She came, then?" said Eddie, eyeing the flowers.

"Yes, she came, Eddie, but you didn't tell me half how pretty she was, or how low and sweet her voice was. She left the flowers, and fixed them in the dish herself!"

"How long did she stay?" asked Eddie, watching his sister's sunny face.

"Oh, a long time. She came up the stairs so softly that I didn't hear her; and as the door stood open, she said, 'Is this Minnie?' and I said, 'Yes, ma'am;' and asked her to walk in. She took off her gloves and her bonnet—the one with the rose-buds, Eddie—and told me I was a very nice housekeeper."

"Did she ask about mamma?" inquired the pleased boy.



“Yes, and when I told her about mamma, and showed her the picture, she talked as if she had always known her. She said I looked like mamma, Eddie, and that if I tried very hard, praying to our Father to help me, I would be just like her, one of these days.”

“Is she coming again?”

“Yes, she said she should certainly come, and that Willie was coming too. That was the only thing I didn’t like; for I know he is a coarse, rough boy, and I don’t want him.”

“O Minnie, you will like him very much,” exclaimed Eddie.

“I don’t believe it. I don’t like boys, anyhow; they scratch and bite, like Tom and Joe Wood.”

“Do I scratch, Minnie?” asked Eddie, much amused.

“No, but then you are Eddie. That is different.”



Her brother laughed, and they went down to tea together.

It was manifest that Miss Addie had said more than Minnie told, for there was a strong effort on her part, for some time after the visit, to be very neat and clean about the house, and very good herself, both towards Eddie, who was always gentle with her, and with her little friends below stairs.

One of Eddie's daily charges was that she must keep within doors, and not play with the children in the street, and very often, when he came home at night, he would take her to one of the public parks for an hour or two. She tried harder than ever to obey this command, after Miss Addie's visit, and the brother, seeing all these things, could only wish that the good lady would repeat her visit soon.

This continued for more than a week, and then the "good fit" began to wear off. Eddie



found the floor unswept when he came home, and his little sister romping down-stairs. Once he found her with her dress torn and her face and hands covered with dirt. He was quick to notice all these little things, as he had the care of her constantly on his mind, and as he so greatly longed to have her grow like her mother. But he also knew how hard it must be for her—alone, as she was—to do just what was right, so he never scolded, but did the duties she left undone, and gently reminded her of her own appearance. He could not help seeing, boy as he was, that if at any time she might choose to disregard his words, he could not control her. It seemed impossible for him to be harsh toward his lonely, orphan sister.

One evening he had returned home to find her with her hair very much tossed, sitting in the middle of the room, on the floor, with a



pair of scissors and a newspaper, with which she was cutting dolls and scattering scraps of paper in every direction. Just after he came in Mrs. Wood called them to supper. Eddie sat by the window, looking out. Minnie jumped up, pushed the hair out of her eyes, shook the scraps from her dress, and called out :

"Come, Ed, there's supper."

"I shall be ready when you've brushed your hair," said Eddie, quietly.

"I ain't going to brush it! Come on!"

Eddie sat still with his face toward the window. "I cannot go with you," he said, sorrowfully.

"Well then, go alone! I'm going"—and she turned toward the door and opened it. "Aint you coming?" she asked, standing still with her hand on the latch.

"No, dear. I was wondering if mother



would know her little girl if she could see her now." The eyes turned toward her were glistening with tears.

Her hand fell from the latch, and she went away into her little room, from which she came in a moment with nicely arranged hair, and placing her hand on the back of Eddie's chair, she said, in a low voice, "I'm mamma's own little girl! Come, Eddie!"

Eddie went joyfully, and the supper was eaten thankfully by one of the company, at least.

Perhaps it was a fortunate thing that Eddie did not know to how many temptations his little sister was daily exposed. He realized them a little, for he grew thoughtful and weary looking. Willie went home with him for an hour or two one evening, and though at first Minnie crept away from him, yet his sunny face and manner attracted her, and once



at ease with him, they became very good friends.

The three had a long pleasant ramble in the square, and Willie parted from them very reluctantly, when the fading daylight warned him that it was time for him to be at home.

One day also, much to Eddie's joy, Miss Jenkins told him he might bring Minnie with him to the store. She was delighted with the idea, and although she was a little afraid of Miss Jenkins, still, after the lady kindly put her on a high stool, in a position where she could see all that went on, both inside and out, she sat still, perfectly contented, watching the stream of people, with occasionally a word from one of the two boys as they went and came between the counters and the desk.

Miss Jenkins was pleased, because she gave so little trouble, and rewarded her with an orange from her dinner-basket. She had a



long play with the little kitten, and tied a blue ribbon which she picked out of the waste basket round its neck, much to the amusement of the boys, for the kitten was continually untying it by stepping on the ends. Altogether it was a day long remembered by Minnie, and talked of for the amusement of Mrs. Wood's little tribe.

Nevertheless, there were many, many days when she had every moment her own, to go and come as she liked, with only Eddie's warnings and God's protection to keep her from evil.

Finally, being lonely and eager for play, she sought the company of the children who thronged the little street: bad, rude children, whose parents left them to take care of themselves, while the daily bread was earned.

Early in the day, when Eddie was safely away at the store, Minnie would come down



from the lonesome little room and join them at their play, rough and rude as it was. She thought, at first, while the still small voice within her was still busy, that she would mingle only with the gentler children, who were more quiet in their plays; but she soon grew tired of this, and learned to prefer the rude children, in whose company God's name was often heard spoken profanely, and where Minnie became so used to wrong that she never shrank from it any more.

Nevertheless, punctually as the clock struck five, she left her play, and sought the house, that her brother might not know where she had been.

Mrs. Wood saw her daily, but her own children played in the alley, and she thought what was well enough for them was well enough for Minnie, so she never interfered. If the brother found her ruder in speech or



rougher in manner, his face grew troubled, but he knew not the cause, as he could not keep her near him.

One Saturday afternoon Eddie was dismissed earlier than usual. One of the members of the firm had lost his mother; and so, after staying in the store with the shutters half closed, and wandering about in an uncertain, idle way, which death always brings into such places where mourning is a form, not a reality, the clerks were dismissed at an early hour; and glad to be released, took their way speedily homeward.

It was but a few minutes after three when Eddie was dismissed, and he hurried on, planning to take Minnie into the square for the remainder of the afternoon. He came into the alley by a short turn, which brought him close to his own door, where Mrs. Wood was standing on the steps.



“Where is Minnie?” he asked, stopping, out of breath from his hurried walk.

Mrs. Wood would have been glad just at that moment if the little girl had been out of sight, but there was no help for it. “There she is,” she replied, pointing to a group not far off.

A collection of ragged, dirty children were gathered round a child’s broken wagon, to which they were trying to fasten a rope, so that they might draw it through the court. They were filling the air with their noises, pushing and pulling one another, scolding and swearing. In the midst of the group, as loud and vehement as any, in a torn, dirty dress, and a face which sadly needed washing, stood Minnie.

Eddie uttered an exclamation of dismay, and sprang toward the group. They parted right and left, until he reached his sister, who



had crouched down beside a wall. He lifted her bodily from among them, and carried her in his arms to the door step, where he put her down.

“How long has Minnie looked like this, and played there, Mrs. Wood?” asked Eddie, almost drawing back from the dirty little girl before him.

“Oh, this long while,” answered Mrs. Wood, angrily; “and you needn’t set up. She ain’t any better than my children, and they play there.”

Eddie had sharp words on his tongue for an answer to this speech, but he remembered Mrs. Wood’s many kindnesses, and with a deep flush, set his lips together, and said nothing. He took his little sister’s hand and led her upstairs; but the hopelessness of his face and manner made Mrs. Wood very uncomfortable for hours after.



Cash Boy.



Minnie, for her part, said not a word, but let her brother lead her where he would. At the head of the stairs he dismissed her. "Go and make yourself look more like my little sister," he said, sternly; and then, entering the room, he sat down by the window and tried to think. Minnie came back presently, and sat down silently some distance from him.

"Minnie, how long have you been playing with the alley children?" he asked, very gently, after a few minutes.

"Oh, a good while, Eddie."

"Days, or weeks?"

"Weeks, I guess."

"And yet you let me think you stayed in the house every day!"

There was no reply, and Minnie sat looking at her brother's worn face, in a frightened way, which tried him exceedingly.

He heaved a deep sigh, and then said:



"Minnie, I do not scold you, for I am neither your father nor mother. I feel more grieved than I can say; and I am going over to Miss Addie Gale's to ask her what I must do. When I tell you that you are not to stir from this room, except for supper, I hope you will obey; but for fear you should not—for I cannot trust you any more," he added, sorrowfully—"I shall ask Mrs. Wood to take charge of you."

"Oh, Eddie!" cried the little girl, sobbing; "scold me, only don't talk that way! Indeed, indeed I'll be good!"

The brother did not reply in words, only just before he left the room he knelt a moment beside his chair, and then came and kissed her twice.



III.

Aunt Addie's Plan.

“Commit thy way unto the Lord, and put thy trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass.”

THE warm afternoon light was over everything as Eddie stepped out into the open air. He stopped a moment in the shade, raised his hat, and wiping the perspiration from his forehead, replaced it with a weary sigh. He had a long distance to walk, and the horse-cars looked very tempting; but he had no money to purchase a ride, so he turned his face resolutely in the direction of Willie's home, and walked rapidly away.

He found the house easily, although he had



never been there before, and he walked up the gravelled path with a little feeling of envy in his heart that they should have so much comfort while he had so little. His timid ring brought aunt Martha to the door. He inquired for Miss Addie, and being invited in, followed the lady into the little summer-dressed parlor where Miss Addie sat at a window, with Willie beside her. The latter sprang to his feet with an exclamation of surprise and dismay.

"Eddie Horton!" he said, in an astonished tone, "what brought you here?"

Miss Addie checked him, and came towards Eddie quickly, seeing that he was in trouble.

"I am very glad to see you, Eddie," she said, reaching out her hand and smiling pleasantly. "I was saying to Willie a few moments ago that it is time you made us a visit. Take this chair by the window, where you will feel the cool breeze after your warm walk."



Eddie sat down in the window recess, in the chair they had placed for him, and having no reply for all their kindness, while his heart was full with the feeling of it, and his burden of care, he leaned his head down on the little light stand near him and burst into tears.

Willie, much dismayed, was hastening to him, when aunt Addie placed her hand upon his arm.

“Not now,” she said, quietly ; “let me speak to Eddie.”

He stopped, and stood silently looking at his friend.

Aunt Addie waited until the sobs were checked, and then asked him what was the matter.

“I *do* beg your pardon,” Miss Addie, he said, “but I am in trouble. When I went home to-night I found that Minnie had been playing with rude, bad children, not only to-



day, but many days past, and concealing it from me, because I had forbidden her going outside the house. I knew how useless it would be for me to scold her or to forbid her doing so again, for the temptation is very strong, and I am away so much ; besides, I am only her brother, and she does not like to be controlled. I felt strongly, Miss Addie, how unfit I was to have the care of her, and not knowing what to do next, I came to ask you. You know she is ten years old, and I am only fourteen, and mother is gone."

He almost broke down again, as the thought of his loneliness returned to him. The sympathetic eyes filled with tears.

"Where is Minnie now?" asked Miss Addie.

"At home. She will stay there until I come back. Poor little girl! she was frightened at my finding out her wrong, and at my grave face."

“Did you scold her?”

“No ma’am, I was too much grieved,” replied the boy, his lip quivering again. “I only told her I was coming to you. I begged that God would help me to do just what was right, and I think He sent me here.”

“I think He did, Eddie,” replied the lady. “I wish I could have been more with Minnie, or that I could bring her here, but that is impossible.”

She did not add, what was true, that every cent over and above her daily needs went to clothe and feed the bright-faced boy at her side, and that to do this, she spent many weary hours over her sewing-machine, where so much of the delicate work which afterwards ornamented the store windows, was commenced and finished. God and her sister were the only ones who knew of all Miss Addie’s charity.

She sat silent a few minutes, and then said :



"Eddie, I have a plan for Minnie which you may not approve, but which seems the best under the circumstances. There is an Orphan Home on Pilgrim-street, where many widows who are obliged to earn their bread away from home leave their children from Monday morning until Saturday night, coming for them then and keeping them over Sunday. The little ones are clothed, fed and educated, and I think in your case it could be done without expense to you, although usually the mothers pay some little sum towards the board of the children. I can give you a note for the Superintendent, whom I know, and I think he will admit Minnie. What do you think of it?"

Eddie's eyes sought the floor. "I do not know," he said, in a low voice.

Miss Addie looked toward him a moment pityingly, and then said: "Come here a moment, Eddie."



He came and stood by her chair, with his eyes still lowered and his lips quivering.

She rested her hand upon his shoulder and said, earnestly: "Don't you think God can take care of Minnie as well away from you as with you, Eddie?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And you know it will be best for her, although you will be lonesome."

"Yes, ma'am. But, oh! Miss Addie, mother left her in my care. Will I be doing right if I send her away from me?"

"Think, Eddie, how will you be doing her the most good: by sending her where she will have the best of care, or leaving her with the children of the street, with your company for a few hours only each day, to keep her in the right way?"

He did not lift his head, and the hand she held shook with his effort to keep from sobbing.



"I will leave it to you, Miss Addie," he said, presently; "you may write the note, if you think best."

She rose and left him standing by her chair.

Willie sat looking at his friend, longing to say something cheering, but knowing nothing which would bring him any comfort; so they were silent until Miss Addie returned. Perhaps her instant glance at the two, as she came in, the one so bright and merry, with not a shade of doubt or trouble on his face, the other so bowed down with the heaviness of his burden, made her come all the more tenderly to the boy she had left, and as she put the hastily written note into his hand, bend down and kiss him.

The eyes which were lifted for the first time to her face, although they were full of tears, did not lack gratitude for what she had done.

"I thank you very much," he said, and



she could not tell whether it was for the advice and note, or the kiss.

As he opened the door, Willie came forward and held out his hand. "Keep up a good heart, Eddie boy," he said, "and if you wish to take Minnie to the Home on Monday, do not hurry to the store, for I will attend to your duties until you get there."

Eddie grasped the hand held out to him, and with a word of good-bye to Miss Addie, closed the door behind him.

"God has been very good to us, Willie," said Aunt Addie, turning round upon her boy.

"Yes, Aunt Addie, I know it well," replied the boy, gratefully.

Eddie's heart was still sore as he shut the gate, but much lighter than it had been half an hour before. The long walk drove away the traces of suffering from his face, and all



that Minnie saw when he came in was that he looked a little more sober than usual. The aching heart underneath was hidden from her.

He said nothing about his visit then, but after supper he drew her to him and informed her of Miss Addie's plan, telling her as much as he knew about the Home.

Minnie cried very much at first, and said she would not go; but Eddie's distressed face stopped her; and although she was in no way inclined to go, she ceased crying and listened to her brother.

"When the dear Lord took mamma away, Minnie," he said, "she told me I must be very kind to you, and I think the best way for me to do this will be to place you where you will be tenderly cared for. Besides," he added, "you know you are to come home every Saturday."

He talked a long time before she could be



brought to listen, but at length she grew quite accustomed to the thought, and when she went to sleep was almost reconciled to the idea of a new home.

Eddie went down-stairs, paid Mrs. Wood, and told her of his plan. She felt a little rebuked at the boy's sad face, knowing that she might have dealt more justly with the children, and kept Minnie more at home, but she only said she thought it was a good plan.

When he came back to his room, he lighted a lamp, and walking softly about so as not to disturb his sister, he gathered her clothing together in a little trunk, which had been his mother's. He folded and arranged the few dresses in a womanly fashion, and as though they had been costly fabrics.

He closed it, at length, with a little sigh, and putting out the light, stepped into Minnie's room to see if she was sleeping, before he



sought rest himself. The moonlight was streaming in through the window, and flooding the little cot-bed where she lay, sleeping as calmly and sweetly, as if there was not a wish of her life ungratified.

Eddie looked at her a moment in her fresh, healthy sleep, and then the thought of all the evil to which she had been exposed, and which might still be hovering over her, made him reach out his hands and fall on his knees, crying: "Mother! oh mother! come back!"

There was no answer, except that the brick walls outside echoed it in a dead way, and the little sleeper stirred and moaned. The voices of some half drunken men, noisily laughing, came up to him, and the murmur of Mrs. Wood's voice singing an Irish melody to her wakeful baby.

Eddie knelt and tried to pray. The sobs came faster than words at first, but finally he



grew more quiet, and left his trouble in the hands of God.

Then he sought his bed, and if sleep did not come to him immediately, it was not from any want of faith in Him to whom he had committed his precious trust.

By Monday morning Minnie was contented to put on her hat and accompany her brother to the Home. She was quite excited with the prospect, and chatted busily about the good little girls she was sure to find there. Eddie tried to rouse himself and be glad with her, but his heart sunk when the great gate clanged after them, and they walked hand in hand up the broad pathway, toward the white building which, with its five massive pillars, looked so imposing in the morning light.

Eddie's ring brought a servant, who opened the door with a rattling of keys and bolts.



“Can I see the Superintendent?” asked Eddie.

“You can come in, and I’ll see,” replied the girl, opening the door, and allowing them to pass her. “You are too old for the Home,” she observed to Eddie, carelessly, as she turned to lead the way.

“I came with my sister,” replied Eddie, flushing.

She did not remark upon this, but led the way along the stone-paved hall into the Superintendent’s office, which contained a large desk filled with papers and scattered over with books, two or three chairs, and a tall clock. The floor of this room was of stone, and uncarpeted, except under the desk and its attendant chair, where was laid a small piece of carpet. The servant bade the children sit down, while she went to call Mr. Brown.

They did so, and she turned and left them,



and they heard her footsteps echoing through the long stone hall, until the sound was lost. It was very still. They could hear the voices of children in the far distance, and the noise of pounding somewhere, but the tall clock ticked, ticked, the minutes away, and nobody came. By and by a great bell rang out, banging and clanging a few minutes, as if for an alarm of fire. Presently they heard the tramp of many feet coming up the stairs, and low talk, and laughter. Then the voices died away, and they heard distant singing, and a voice as if in prayer. Then everything was still except the clock for a long time, until the sound of the voices and the feet came near again, and passed—all except one pair of feet, heavier than the rest, which seemed to turn toward the room they were in. It was the Superintendent, Mr. Brown, who appeared in the doorway, looking over the spectacles



which he wore across a very large nose, and eyeing the two children who sat there. Eddie rose and waited.

"Hm! How long have you been here?" demanded the gentleman.

"Half an hour, sir."

"Who let you in?"

"The servant, sir. I came to see if I could leave my sister here every week from Monday until Saturday."

The Superintendent sat down in his chair and looked over his spectacles, first at Minnie, then at Eddie.

The boy handed him Miss Addie's note. He said, "Hm!" once more, tore it open with one movement of his fingers, and read, half aloud, "Respectful compliments—begs leave— orphan boy and girl—industrious—sister too young to be alone—boy busy—responsible for one dollar a week, &c. Addie Gale."

—o—o—o—
“Hm! What do you do? This lady, who is my very good friend, says you are industrious.”

“I am a cash-boy for Dates & Co., dry goods dealers.”

“How much do you earn?”

“Three dollars a week, sir.”

“Where does it go?”

“To pay board, sir.”

“This lady says she will be responsible for a dollar a week on your sister's board. How is that?”

“It must be her own dear kindness, sir,” said the boy, greatly moved, “for she said nothing to me about it.”

The Superintendent looked at him a moment, and then said, “Hm! Little girl may remain. Got any clothes?”

“Yes, sir. I will bring them whenever you say.”



“To-night, then. Now you can go ; Dates and Co. may want you.”

Eddie was ready, but he went over to Minnie first, untied her hat, smoothed her hair in a womanly fashion, and kissing her hurriedly and telling her to be mamma's little girl, with a bow to the gentleman, was gone.

Mr. Brown, who had eyed this proceeding very closely, rang a bell near him, and while waiting an answer, took a sheet of paper and a pen and commenced to write rapidly. Any one looking over his shoulder, might have read these words:

“JOHN DATES, JR.:

“*Sir*—A boy named Eddie Horton, professing to be one of your employees, left a sister in my charge this morning. Says he has lost both parents, and has been left in sole care of his sister. Quite an affecting



story altogether. I await your reply to know if it be a genuine case of need.

“Yours, &c.,

“J. BROWN,

“*Supt. Orphan Home.*”

Mr. Brown looked up to find an attendant standing at his elbow.

“Ah, Wilkins,” said he, “take this child to Mrs. Monroe, and tell her she is a week boarder; then come back and post this letter. Here, little girl”—turning to Minnie so quickly that it frightened her—“stop jumping, and tell me your name.”

“Minnie Horton, sir.”

“Well, Minnie, you are to go with this lad to Mrs. Monroe, who will take good care of you.”

Minnie timidly followed the lad, who led her through the long stone hall where she had



heard the sound of so many feet, and at one side of which was an archway. Under this they passed, and Wilkins knocked at a door just within it. A lady, tall, pleasant-faced and in a widow's cap, answered it.

"Mr. Brown sent this little girl, ma'am—a week boarder," said the boy, delivering his charge, and hurrying away.

Minnie followed the matron into the pleasant parlor, where green blinds shaded the windows, and pretty bright pictures upon the walls made a pleasing contrast with the dark carpet and furniture. Mrs. Monroe sat down in a low chair, and calling Minnie to her, asked her a great many questions. The little girl answered timidly, wishing for Eddie's hand in hers, and his voice to do the talking.

Her quiet gentle manner pleased the lady, who exerted herself to prevent her from being lonesome. She remained there some time,



looking at picture-books and following with her eyes Mrs. Monroe's quick steps about the room, as she dusted and arranged its many little ornaments. She was sorry when the great bell she had heard from the office clanged out again, and the children's feet went tramping by.

Mrs. Monroe stopped her dusting and called Minnie. "Come," she said, "we will go into the school-room now, and after school is over any one of the little girls will show you the way to dinner."

Minnie thought she had much rather stay where she was, but she took the lady's hand and they passed out, Mrs. Monroe locking the door behind her with a key belonging to a great bunch which hung at her waist, and which shook and jingled very much as she walked.

Minnie's little feet went pattering along the



hall beside her conductor, and her heart beat fast when she thought of the many little eyes which would look at her.

Mrs. Monroe opened the school-room door and led her in. In the happy days gone by the gentle mother had taught her daughter, so that this was Minnie's first sight of a school-room, and very different from ordinary school-rooms it was.

The children, varying in age from four to fourteen, were seated in a bank of little chairs which rose up in an inclined-plane from the floor. The occupants of these seats all wore blue checked aprons, and looked like a regiment of very small soldiers. The teacher stood in front of them, reading a hymn, which in a moment after their entrance the children began to sing, all standing.

Minnie looked up into Mrs. Monroe's face in wonder. Such sweet music! and such a



multitude of sweet voices blending together !
She listened a long time without heeding the
words, but the last verse caught her attention :

“ O, what can you tell, little child, little child,
O, what can you tell, little child upon my knee ?
The secret of your happy smile,
Now whisper it to me ?

It is the love of God in Heaven,
The God who made both you and me ;
And every day I seek His face,
Upon my bended knee.”

“ The love of God ! Why, that’s what Eddie
is always talking about. I wonder if it is that
which makes their faces so bright ?”

So thought the little girl, as she listened, but
she forgot it again when the hymn ceased—
that is as nearly as we ever forget anything
once heard—for the teacher came up to her,
and taking her by the hand, led her to a seat
half way up the inclined plane. She had
enough to do for the next two hours watching



all the bright faces, and reading very correctly when the teacher called upon her. These were very different children—while they were here, at any rate—from those who had been her playmates in Richmond-street.

Minnie felt a little strange when they were dismissed at noon, and she found herself surrounded by the blue-checked aprons. But one of the larger girls came and took her kindly by the hand, and telling her dinner was ready, led her away through the stone hall, past the big bell which was ringing furiously, into a long low room, where the children were forming up and down on each side of two long tables, where their dinner was spread.

It was very still for a minute after they were all placed, while the teacher asked a blessing, and then they all commenced their meal. Minnie thought it very funny to take dinner standing up, but still she ate heartily.



for the morning had been long, and she was hungry.

After dinner there was another session of school, and then a play time in the great green yard, where the older girls played croquet and the younger ones jumped rope, while the boys in the green yard on the other side of the carriage way, screamed and shouted as though they were wild. Minnie enjoyed it very much, looking on. She didn't care to join them, although she was asked several times; she was not used to the strange faces, and felt just a little lonesome. By-and-by her friend who had taken her to dinner came up, and they went away together into the house, where she showed Minnie the next day's lesson, and heard her read it.

It was the first of many little study times they had together, and Minnie remembered for years after, the kindness of this girl, who

helped her through many childish difficulties and encouraged her attempts toward the right.

After they were gathered again in the dining-room for supper, they were all sent, two and two, into a large—and to Minnie a very beautiful—room, hung with pretty pictures and texts. Mr. Brown was there, and when the children were all seated in little chairs before him, he talked with them a few minutes, and then asked them to sing a hymn.

Minnie saw what she thought to be a large box on the platform behind Mr. Brown's desk, but when they were asked to sing, the teacher went and seated herself near it, and touched it with her fingers, and then Minnie heard what struck her ear as the softest, sweetest tones in the world. The children all rose up and sang while it was still playing. Minnie was very sorry when the sound ceased, and the lady came away.



She thought they would all pass out then, but they did not, for as soon as the music was over, they all knelt down in front of their chairs, and with folded hands and closed eyes repeated the Lord's Prayer.

Minnie knelt and folded her hands as the rest did, but she was so much surprised that she scarcely joined in saying "Our Father."

Afterwards she went away with the other children up the broad staircase into rooms above ; long high rooms, where the white beds stood in rows, and each little girl had a bed to herself. The teacher who went up with them, showed her the one she was to occupy, and across the foot of which lay one of the blue-checked aprons.

"Fold your white apron nicely and put it in your little trunk," said the lady, "and put on the blue one in the morning."

Minnie looked down and saw her own little

trunk standing by the bed. Eddie must have been here then and left it. Why did he not come and speak to her? She wanted to cry, but she did not dare, so she undressed quickly and crept in between the white sheets. As she laid her head upon the pillow, four or five tears dropped upon it, partly for Eddie, partly from home-sickness, but mostly, I am sorry to say, because of the blue-checked apron which she did not wish to wear; her white one seemed so nice among all the blue ones. But presently she left off thinking about it, and when the room was still she forgot her trouble and went to sleep, dreaming she saw a great number of blue-checked aprons all standing up stiff in the chapel and singing, in company with the notes of the organ, a hymn which her mother had taught her.



IV.

Minnie at the "Home."

"What is our hope? Truly our hope is in Thee."

WHEN Mr. Brown took his place in his office the next morning, he found upon his desk a pile of letters, among which was the following:

"MR. J. BROWN:

"I believe the story of Eddie Horton to be quite correct. He is a steady, trusty boy, and the best "Cash" I have in the store. It is a pitiful case. I will inquire further.

"With deep respect,

"Yours, &c.,

JOHN DATES, JR."



Young John Dates, upon calling Eddie to his desk the day before, found a very grave-faced boy. He listened in silence to the story which a question or two drew from him, and then read to him Mr. Brown's note. Eddie explained why he had taken his sister to the "Home."

"You could not have done better," said the young partner, "and I will make it all right with Mr. Brown."

But having dismissed the boy and written the note, the sad face still lingered in his mind, even until evening, when he left his desk and went away to his elegant home. He found his mother seated in the recess of a window in her luxurious parlor, trifling with some delicate work, and watching for his return.

"Well, John, my son, tired out, I suppose," said the gentle, refined voice. "Any news to-day?"



"None whatever, mother," replied the weary merchant, throwing himself upon a sofa and looking thoughtful.

After a few minutes, perceiving that he did not speak, she turned to him again: "What are you thinking so moodily about?" she asked.

"Are you not one of the visiting committee at the Orphan Home in Pilgrim-street, mother?" he asked, as though in answer to her question.

"Yes—why?"

John Dates straightened himself, and told her Eddie Horton's story, and asked her to see what the little girl was like, the next time she went to the Home.

"Poor little things! Are they Americans?"

"Yes; Eddie says they came from Crawford county, and his mother's name was Minnie Woolcot."



“Why, John!” exclaimed the lady, in a surprised way, “I knew her once. She married Joe Horton, you know, and I heard afterwards that he was a drunkard. So they are both dead, and these are their children! Poor things! She was a good sempstress, and used to come out to the old place and sew for weeks for us. She made my wedding-dress;” and the lady ceased to speak, and thought over those long past days.

“They have very few friends, mother,” continued John Dates, after a moment, “and have been living in Richmond-street. The boy lives there still, I believe. I feel as if I had a duty towards my employees, after I have paid them their wages. If employers only took a little more care and thought, there would be fewer broken down lives. We must do something for these children.”

“Indeed we must. Minnie Woolcot’s child-



ren must not suffer, when we can supply their wants."

This ended the conversation for the time, but this mother and son, to whom God had given plentifully of this world's goods, never let an opportunity slip where they could do good.

Perhaps if Eddie had known all the help which was coming to cheer him, he would not have felt quite so lonely, when he reached Richmond-street, after having carried Minnie's trunk over to the Home. He had hoped to see her, and having been refused permission to do so, felt heavy-hearted.

It seemed very desolate to him—the little home in which she had been the bright spot, and but for his utter trust and dependence on the love of "God in Heaven" of which Minnie had heard in the school-room, he would have been utterly cast down. But he remembered



that she was in safer Hands than his, and was content to be lonely.

If Minnie had known, when she lay down to rest with that fearful blue-checked apron so near and Eddie so far away, what God was getting ready for her, she might have spared her tears.

Only the loving Lord above knew just what was coming—knew surely that “the ocean of distress into which they had fallen was but the hollow of His pitiful hand;” where he held them until he had prepared his blessing. So, during the long warm night, when sin raged in the great city, and many eyes were unvisited by sleep on account of trouble or sorrow or guilt, and the air was full of wrong, going up to God, the two little sleepers were held in safety by the Master’s watchful eye, and their faces were peaceful in the sleep—“He giveth His beloved.”



One rainy afternoon, two or three days later, while the children of the Orphan Home were amusing themselves in their play-room, the door suddenly opened and admitted two or three visitors, accompanied by one of the teachers. Minnie, who had been sitting by herself in a corner by the window looking out, and almost counting the hours which must pass before Saturday came, turned to discover the meaning of the sudden hush in the room, and saw a tall, dignified lady in mourning, and two gayly dressed but very elegant ladies beside her. The mild sweet face of the first lady held Minnie's attention, until they moved toward her corner, when, fearing that watching them so closely might seem impolite, she turned toward the window again. In a moment she felt Miss Warren's touch on her shoulder, and heard Miss Warren's voice say—"This is the little girl." As she turned a

second time, the lady whose face she had liked, stooped and took her hand.

"Yes, this is Minnie Horton," she said; "her face is so like her mother's that I could not fail to know her."

"Did you know mamma?" asked the little girl, a quick look of surprise and pleasure coming into her face.

"Yes, dear, I knew your mother many years ago. How long has it been since you lost her?"

"Dear mamma! It is almost nine months." She spoke as if it were a weary, weary time, and then added, brightening: "Eddie has her picture, and Eddie is coming for me on Saturday."

"Eddie is your brother, who is in my son's employ, I suppose. My son is Mr. Dates."

"Yes, ma'am, that's Eddie. I havn't seen him since Monday."



"Do you not feel happy here in the Home, among all the little girls?" asked the lady.

"Not quite yet, ma'am," she replied, timidly : "only in chapel. I like that very much. I cannot forget them all so soon—mamma and Eddie."

"No, dear, I could not expect it," replied the lady, pressing the little hand.

"Eddie says if I learn to love and serve the Lord Jesus, I shall be like mamma," said Minnie, in a low voice.

The lady's eyes filled with tears. "I am sure you will," she said, adding, after a moment's pause, "I am going to take these ladies through the Home, and as I want to keep you with me as long as I can, you may go with us, if you like."

She went with them gladly, and wandered all over the great building, Mrs. Dates professedly showing the ladies the Home, but in



reality talking to the little girl, and growing every moment more interested in her. In the chapel Minnie grew quite talkative, and told her how they sang sweet hymns there night and morning.

Finally they went into the infirmary. Minnie's eyes opened very wide at the sight of the pretty room with its white beds and ailing occupants. There were pictures hung about the room, and flowers growing in pots by the windows, while two or three canaries made the air musical with their sweet songs.

There was one little girl whom Minnie noticed especially, who was propped up in her bed by pillows, and was looking over a book of pictures. Mrs. Dates stopped before her, and asked her how she was.

She answered, with a bright smile, "Quite comfortable, thank you," and turned her head toward them all as if she was very glad to see



them. Mrs. Dates stooped to her satchel, which she had placed upon the floor, to find some oranges, and as she did so, she said to Minnie, in a low voice :

“ This little girl is one of the lambs of Jesus. She can never again be well and strong as you are, and yet she is always as she is now.”

Minnie looked up in the placid little face leaning against the white pillows, and seeing the peaceful, patient look which dwelt there, wondered how it was, and wished she could stay and talk with her.

She was sorry when they turned away, and the vision of the happy little face lingered in her mind even after Mrs. Dates bade her good-by and she had gone back into the supper-room where the children were gathered. She wondered as they sat in the chapel that night whether the solemn tones of the organ reached her in her far-away room, and whether she



had ever heard the children sing. This was the only part of the day which Minnie heartily enjoyed, but when she took her little corner seat, and joined with the rest in the music and the prayer at morning and evening, she was really happy.

It was Thursday when the ladies came, and by Saturday Minnie had grown accustomed to the Home; and it would be quite impossible to tell the number of things she had saved up to tell Eddie. She was allowed to wear her white apron when she went home, and she found it clean and nicely starched when she went up into the dormitory to brush her hair.

On the whole Eddie had passed a much harder week than his sister. Her life was new and exciting, and she was surrounded by pleasant companions, while everything in the little room reminded Eddie of his sister, and he passed many solitary hours. There was



nothing to trouble him, only he was lonely. He knew that Minnie was safe and well, for Mr. Dates had kindly told him of his mother's visit, and how much she liked the little girl. The young merchant liked the boy, with his steady, grave ways. He never caused trouble by his carelessness or noise, as the other boys did. He was not even merry with the rest, which sometimes troubled Mr. Dates; but when he talked with him he soon found how the care of his little sister weighed upon his heart, and his thoughts were almost always with her. The kind-hearted man wished very much that they could both be made happy, and have some merry child-life before they grew beyond it.

He was not one moment behind his time on Saturday afternoon, and he found a very glad little sister waiting for him. The clasp of his hand told him, if he had needed to know, how



much she had longed for him ; and his care of her through the streets, and his pleasure in her neatness and beauty showed how he had missed her. Her tongue was very busy telling all she had seen and heard : of the chapel, the sick child, the school, Mrs. Dates, and above all, that Mrs. Dates had known her mother, and said her little daughter looked like her.

Home seemed very pleasant to her—even if it were Richmond-street with its court so dirty and narrow. The room, and Minnie's little closet, for it was scarcely more, were as clean as Eddie's hands could make them ; and Willie had brought him some bright flowers, to make it cheerful. Mrs. Wood's little tribe were as glad to see Minnie as if she had been gone a year, and gathered round her like bees, only with far more noise than a sensible bee would make. The children in the alley called to her, but she drew closer to Eddie, saying :



"O Eddie, I am sorry I ever knew them. It is so different now."

Eddie heard her and was very thankful.

Miss Warren asked Minnie, just before she left the Home, to come on Sunday to the children's church in the morning, and the Sunday-school in the afternoon. She bade her ask her brother also, and promised that he should remain to dine with the children, so that he might be ready for the school in the afternoon. Minnie was not slow in delivering Miss Warren's message, and urging the invitation herself, with a description of the house, and a wish that Eddie might see how she lived.

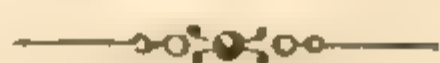
At first he hesitated, for he was naturally timid, and would rather have stayed quietly at home; but finally he remembered how much his mother had always wanted Minnie to go to Sunday-school. So feeling himself in the



vacant place, he consented; and seeing her face brighten, and hearing her quick laugh of pleasure, he was not sorry.

None who saw the two children that bright, warm Sunday morning, thought of them as friendless and sorrowful, alone in the world, with only each other for help and support: they even forgot it for a little time themselves.

When they arrived they found that they were a little early, and also that it was the visiting hour for the parents of those children who were half orphans. Eddie and Minnie sat in the waiting-room, and with nothing else to do, watched the meetings. They did not forget that they were motherless, when the door opened, and a little boy sprang toward a waiting mother, and was clasped tenderly and lovingly. They did not forget that they were fatherless, when a hard-working man, so lonely all the week without his little daughter,



received her here so eagerly, and was so glad and proud of the bright-faced little girl who called him "father." Eddie pressed the little hand which lay in his very close, and sat looking with a strained heart, while Minnie, with her eyes studying a card upon the wall, would not look. She knew how he was suffering by the clasp of his hand, so just before the great bell rang for chapel service, she put her face close up to his, and whispered: "Never mind, Eddie; look at the card on the wall." Eddie glanced towards the brightly-tinted letters, and read the blessed words,

"OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN."

His lip quivered, and just then the bell clanged out on the air, the children all hurried away, and in two divisions, one of boys and one of girls, marching away into the chapel; and into two hearts, at least, God sent his comforting word of Fatherly protection.



Eddie was very glad that the seat assigned him in the gallery was where he could look directly down upon Minnie as she sat below. She did not know how easily she could have seen him, if she had tried, for she never lifted her head, but kept her eyes fixed upon the gentleman who talked to them. She wondered all the while how Eddie liked the chapel, and whether he could see the beautiful picture over the organ. She did not know that it was a copy of Benjamin West's great painting of Christ Healing the Sick, and greatly admired by all lovers of art. She had never heard of Benjamin West or his picture, but she knew that the divine light on the face of the Healer spoke kindness and love to those poor people, and that they were looking to him for help and healing. No one had told her that the loving face was that of our Lord, and that the outstretched hand was powerful to bring comfort.



and strength to the sick gathered about Him. She knew it all somehow, without being told; no other face could look as this did. So she sat wondering what those people said when they were healed, and hoping Eddie noticed the picture. Her thoughts came back now and then to the speaker, and she listened and tried to understand. I am afraid she often failed, for the gentleman used many long words which the children could not understand, and some of them shut their eyes and went to sleep. Minnie could not listen all the time, but she kept her eyes wide open, and sat very still, thinking if the good man saw her eyes open, he would not be offended if, sometimes, she looked at the organ or the beautiful picture over his head.

Eddie, for his part, sat down and determined to listen. He heard the hymn "Jesus is our Shepherd, wiping every tear," and the prayer,



which was so sweet and solemn, now that he and Minnie had learned to say from their hearts, "Our Father." He heard the text also—"Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." Just then his attention was attracted by the picture, and he wondered if those pained faces sang this song when the divine touch took away their suffering. His eyes fell then to the little orphan girls in the seats down-stairs, with the bright happy faces. He looked particularly at one little face which he could just see peeping out from underneath the close bonnet. It was as serene and calm as a summer's morning, and the trouble and sorrow which had lingered there so long had almost all passed away.

Eddie followed the quiet little eyes to where they were resting on the gilded organ pipes, and for a moment, he thought if he were only



there, with his hands upon the keys, he could strike out music which would echo and re-echo the words, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men."

Whenever he looked, however his glance wandered, it came back always to the motionless little sister. He was glad that she was neatly and cleanly dressed, and forgot his own clothes, now growing rather threadbare. He was thankful that her face was sunny and glad, forgetting how lonely they would both be on the morrow. He lost sight of himself entirely in her, with an ever-present sense of the great charge his mother had imposed upon him; so if he heard but little of the good man's sermon that morning, God had not failed to teach him, and as he marched away with the rest, he felt very glad that he had come.



He listened very intently while the blessing was asked in the dining-hall, and wondered if he had done wrong in neglecting this at home. So he said to himself: "We must say a little blessing to ourselves at Mrs. Wood's table. God will hear it just the same; I'll tell Minnie."

The Sunday-school in the afternoon was something strange to both children, for the mother, shrinking from the whole of the outside world of a great city, had kept them close at home. The classes were supplied with volunteer teachers from pleasant city homes, who gave God this part at least of every Sunday. Eddie was put into a class of boys of his own age, whose teacher had not yet arrived.

He felt very strange and awkward at first among all these boys, who were very busy looking at him, but presently he heard a light, springing step on the floor, and a young man

with a sunny face and frank blue eyes, came and took the teacher's chair. Eddie sat back contented. He felt certain now that he should hear something worth thinking about. The boys stopped looking at him too, for they had something else to think about. The young man spoke to each boy as if he felt himself his friend, and was as eager in their selection of library books, as if he had been one of them. Then he opened his Bible and asked them to listen while he read a lesson to them. I do not think there was a boy there who was ignorant of the story of the raising of Lazarus of Bethany, and yet they listened as if they heard it for the first time. He read it as if he felt the divinity of every word, and was lost in wonder at the exceeding love of the Master.

When he had finished reading, he explained to them the mode of burial in the East, and then, suddenly, turned from his Bible and



talked to them, with his face all aglow, of the love of the Lord Jesus for the family at Bethany, his deep sorrow at his friend's death, and his deep sympathy with the fond sisters. "To know all this, boys," he said, "to be sure, as we are, that this love for the brother and sister was real, and then to feel that the same Lord who cared so strongly for them, is looking down from heaven upon all those who love Him, and pitying them in their troubles, just as he pitied Mary and Martha, and rejoicing in their joy, just as he did when he went from the grave with the newly-risen brother, should make us love the dear Saviour with all the strength that is in our lives."

Eddie put every one of the precious words down deep in his heart, to think about and live upon in the week which was to come. If he heard the closing hymn it was only because the words chimed in with his thoughts :



"I love to hear the story
Which angel voices tell :
How once the King of glory
Came down on earth to dwell.
"I am both weak and sinful,
But this I surely know ;
The Lord came down to save me,
Because he loved me so."

The teacher parted from each of his class with a strong clasp of the hand, which fixed his words in one heart, at least. So little does a Sunday-school teacher know of the effect of every uttered word or kindly feeling !

Minnie joined Eddie in the hall with a bright face. "Did you see my teacher, Eddie?" she asked, as soon as she had taken his hand.

"Yes, a pleasant-looking lady in black. Did you like her?"

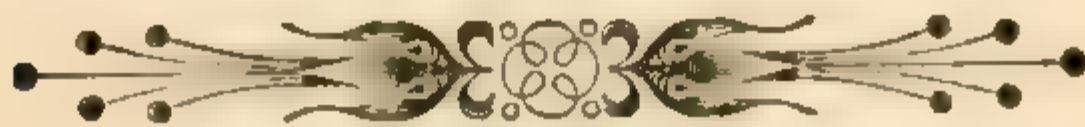
"Why, Eddie, it was Mrs. Dates!" replied the little girl, laughing, "and she was so kind. Did you like it? Will you go again?"



“Yes, Minnie, I liked it very much, and I shall go again next Sunday.”

She was satisfied, only she thought he was very sober. He could not tell her why it was, or how, his heart was going out in love and gratitude to the friend of Lazarus, our Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Two poorly-dressed lonely orphans, trudging through the close warm alley, made foul by dirt and noisy by many voices; tired feet climbing many stairs to a poor room which seemed very empty without the mother's welcome; yet two thankful hearts and two bright faces were there, and with God for their Father, Minnie and Eddie looked hopefully into the unknown future.





V.

Under Suspicion.

"Know how sublime a thing it is,
To suffer and be strong."

ONE morning, some time after this, Eddie came into the store, and hanging his hat upon its usual peg, looked around for Willie Gale. Seeing him in another part of the store, he went over and stood near him.

"Good morning, Eddie. Just got here? How is Minnie?" asked Willie, in one breath.

"Minnie is very well," replied Eddie, answering the last question. "Willie, who is"—



"Hold on a minute, Ed., for fear I forget. I had a letter from mother this morning, and she says that Mr. Dates has bought a fine place, not five minutes' walk from our house. It is beautifully fitted up, and they are coming out there in the fall. Tell Minnie that perhaps I shall see Mrs. Dates some day."

"I'll tell her," replied Eddie; "she is always eager to hear anything about Mrs. Dates. Who is that boy down by my counter?"

"It's a new 'Cash.' I heard Mr. Dates tell him that he would take him on trial. He is a big fellow. I hope he will not plague us."

Eddie, in his own mind, wished the same, as he saw the tall boy peering round the store, with his disagreeable, sharp eyes. Both the boys kept at as great a distance from him as possible all the morning; only, unluckily, Willie amused himself, while they were resting



at noon, by drawing with a piece of chalk, on a dry goods box, what he called portraits of the new cash-boy. While they were laughing at one of them, Willie received a sharp blow on the ear, and turning round, found the subject of their sport at their elbow. One brush of Eddie's hand over the box quickly erased the picture.

"Now, no more of that!" said the new boy.

"No more of *that*, if you please!" returned Willie, flushing.

"Oh! I shall do as I please," said the boy.

"And so shall I, as to that;" said Willie, commencing to use his chalk again.

But Eddie's hand stopped him, and Eddie's voice said :

"Willie, I wouldn't, if I were you."

"None of your interfering," said the new boy, turning to him.

—o—o—o—
“Very well. I shall not trouble you,” returned Eddie.

“Oh, you look like a pecked hen,” sneeringly said the boy.

Eddie neither turned nor answered.

“You’re a goose,” he said again, and then walked away.

Just then both boys were called, and they walked down the store together.

“I wish I were more like you, Eddie boy,” said Willie; “such quarrelsome people as that come to the wrong person when they attempt to annoy you.” He rested his hand on Eddie’s shoulder with a fond look, and they parted.

Later in the afternoon, Eddie stood waiting for a sum of money, which Miss Jenkins was just receiving from a lady who had been buying some expensive goods, and the new boy, with nothing to do just then, looked on from

a little distance. In a moment the lady handed Miss Jenkins the bills—saying, “That is right, I believe, fifty dollars.”

“Yes ma’am, quite right.—Here, Eddie, take this money and see that this is properly packed by the silk boy.”

Eddie started with the bundle and the money, but had gone only a few steps when Miss Jenkins called him. He turned, and as he did so, dropped the bills. He picked them up, and counted them, and found them right. Just then Miss Jenkins said, sharply: “Eddie, did you hear me tell you that you had not got all the goods? Come here! Hurry now, there is no time to waste.”

Just then the new boy stepped up and said pleasantly: “The lady called you. I will take the money to the cashier, if you wish.”

“I wish you would,” said Eddie, accepting the favor, just as he had similar ones from



Willie and Willie from him, many a time. He hurried back, only looking after the boy once to see if he carried the money safely. Miss Jenkins had forgotten to wrap one of the lady's purchases with the rest, and was some minutes putting the bundle together again. As she gave it to him the second time, she asked, "Where is the money?"

"I sent it to the cashier. All right," replied Eddie.

The new boy did not come near them again during the day, but was seemingly very busy indeed, and the boys did not regret it. About six o'clock, Eddie stood with his hand on the door, waiting for Willie, that they might go home together, and thinking very intently.

Suddenly a hand was laid on his shoulder, and a pleasant voice said: "Eddie Horton, what are you thinking about?"

Eddie started, flushed, and turned around to

—o:q:oo—
find Mr. Dates standing near him. He smiled, but did not reply to the question.

“Are your thoughts so very secret that I may not hear one of them?” asked the gentleman.

“No sir,” replied Eddie, flushing still more, and then he added, reluctantly—he was never quick to speak—“I was thinking, sir, of what my Sunday-school teacher told me yesterday.”

“What was it? May I not have the benefit too?” asked Mr. Dates, who really wished to become better acquainted with the boy.

“He said he was certain—*certain*, sir—that those who served the Lord Jesus would always be taken care of. It was the certain part which puzzled me.”

“I am certain too, Eddie,” replied his employer, “because He tells us, ‘I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,’ and I need not tell you that where He is no harm can come.”



He opened the door and went out, saying good-by, pleasantly, and Eddie watched him down the street, thinking how good he looked, and how fortunate he was to have such a Christian employer. Then Willie came, and they walked away together.

The next morning, when Eddie passed Mr. Dates' desk, he looked up, as he always did, to see if the kind face was there, and with the hope of a cheerful "Good morning," which always helped him through the day. Mr. Dates was there, but he was looking over his account books, and with the help of his bookkeeper, comparing entries. He seemed worried and perplexed, and did not look up. In the course of an hour or two, Eddie heard it whispered about that there was money lost, and concluded that was the reason why Mr. Dates looked so anxious. By-and-by, as he stood leaning on one of the counters, talking to



Willie about it, the bookkeeper came up with a grave face, and told him Mr. Dates wanted to speak to him. Eddie took his arms off the counter, and went down the store to the cashier's desk, humming one of the tunes which had been sung at the Home the Sunday before.

"Did you want me, sir?" said Eddie, as he stood at Mr. Dates' elbow; for the gentleman had not noticed him, but was bending over his books. As he spoke, Mr. Dates looked up quickly and gravely into the open face before him.

"Eddie," he said, "I cannot tell you how deeply sorry I am for what I have to say."

Eddie flushed. "Have I been doing anything wrong, sir?" he asked.

"You are accused with a theft of fifty dollars which the cashier found wanting this morning."



Eddie started. "Do *you* believe this, Mr. Dates?" he asked, with trembling lips.

"The proofs are very strong against you, Eddie. Miss Jenkins says that she handed you the fifty dollars, and you told her the cashier had it. It is that particular fifty dollars that is wanting from the account, for Miss Jenkins' book shows it was paid by the lady for silk, and we have her duplicate for fifty dollars' worth of silk here. I will give you the day to think it over, and before I call the clerks together at night, I hope you will come and confess your crime to me, and so prevent a public meeting."

Eddie replied clearly and firmly: "I cannot confess what I have not done; and I would rather die than take what is not mine, and still less anything of yours, when you and your mother have been so kind to me. But I would like to think it over, and I am much

obliged to you for the time you have given me."

Eddie went away steadily down the store, without a change in his step or manner, knowing his master's eye was upon him, and saying to himself, all the while, "I must not falter, for then he will think me guilty, and I must not flinch, for Minnie's sake." But the young master's heart would have felt far more sore than it did, if he could have seen his little cash-boy tremble and grow white as he sat down on a box, at the end of the store, out of sight, and hold his head with both hands, and try to think.

Nothing could he see for some minutes but Minnie's sweet face, and that made him tremble more.

Finally, he made a great effort to remember all the events of the day before, every cent of money he had taken, and every time he had



given it in to the cashier. Then, suddenly, he remembered the new boy, and his offer to take the money to the desk, that it was fifty dollars, and in pay for a silk dress, for he had admired the goods when Miss Jenkins spread it out for the lady to see. At first he thought that it would be wrong to accuse the new boy of the theft; but, finally, he concluded to place the whole case before Mr. Dates, and let him decide. He dared not think beyond this, but steeled himself to composure, and answered Miss Jenkins' bell-call steadily. If he was grave, it was nothing new, for he was never very smiling. Willie met him, in one instance, as he took some money from Miss Jenkins.

"You look pale, Eddie," he said; "don't you feel well?" The lady gave him a quick look.

"I have a headache," he replied, carelessly,



taking up the money with a hand which only a firm determination kept from trembling.

Much as Mr. Dates watched Eldie that day, he could not discover that he faltered or trembled, although he occasionally saw him hold his hand to his head, as if it ached, and once he bathed it at the water-tank. Just before the store closed, Eddie sought Mr. Dates himself, and asking him if he might claim his attention for a minute, told him what he remembered of the bill.

Mr. Dates looked more grave than ever.

"It is a very serious thing to accuse another, Eddie," said he, "when the proofs are so strong against yourself. I hope you have not manufactured this story. I will talk with the boy; but he is an orphan, like yourself, and I have given him a room in the building because he has no home. I hoped you had a more tender heart. I am disappointed in

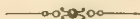


you. You may go now ; we will have a meeting at six o'clock."

Eddie grew dizzy and faint, and it needed an urgent prayer for strength to enable him to walk the room calmly, and not cry out in pain of mind and body. The prayer brought, as it ever does, the needed support, and he fulfilled the remainder of his duties promptly and well. When the great bell struck for the folding of the goods and the closing of the doors, Mr. Dates came from behind his desk and spoke so as to be heard at the extreme end of the store.

"I wish the employees of the firm to gather at the desk as soon as possible. I will detain them but a few minutes."

As he spoke, Eddie was holding at arm's length a piece of cloth which Miss Jenkins was folding. The length she held was laid across his arm slowly, as Mr. Dates gave the



order, but the hands did not fall, and if the boy grew a shade paler, that was all: but he felt as if all the strength had left his body, and he could have sunk down to the floor in very pain and anguish.

In a few minutes his work was done, and he came and stood near the desk, leaning against a little table which was just in front of it, and over which were two gas jets, which burned all night.

Willie came presently, and stood beside him. "Do you know what this means, Eddie?" he asked, in a low tone.

"Yes," replied the boy, gravely.

He stood still, watching the goods put away, the shutters closed, and the clerks one by one assemble near the desk, talking together and waiting for whatever Mr. Dates might have to say. Presently the gentleman himself, with one or two papers in his hand, left the desk



and came out to the table near which Eddie stood. The boy stood back and let him pass to the other end of the table, where he sat down, leaning his head wearily on his hand, and sighing. Eddie's lip quivered.

The new-cash boy sat on the edge of an adjacent counter, humming a tune, and drawing careless marks on bits of paper. The closing of the shutters had darkened the store, and only the two jets, shaded by a green screen, threw light down upon the group by the table.

"It is with deep regret that I call you together to-night," said Mr. Dates, "to inform you that the theft of yesterday, of which you have all doubtless heard, lies with Eddie Horton."

Willie started, looked at his friend, and uttered an exclamation of dismay. Eddie neither moved nor spoke.

Mr. Dates went on to state the affair, and, after a pause, the added statement of Eddie in the afternoon. "If George Long is here," he added, "I wish he would step forward."

The boy came forward, crying, and stopped just within the shade.

"I couldn't do it, you know, Mr. Dates," he said, whimpering. "I'm a lone orphan, and I couldn't do it. He would not have accused me if he had not been guilty himself. It's a poor way to get off, so it is. I know how wicked 'tis to steal, and I couldn't do it."

Eddie removed the hand which shaded his eyes, and the full light shone upon his clear face, and into his eyes, which were fixed upon the boy.

"What evidence is there against me?" asked George.

"Only Eddie's word," said Mr. Dates, reluctantly.

—••••—
 “A boy that will steal will tell a lie,” said the boy, sulkily.

“What evidence is there against Eddie?” some one asked.

“Miss Jenkins shows her list of purchased articles, and the duplicate paper usually brought to the cashier is there. Eddie says he received the fifty dollars from Miss Jenkins. He must have placed the card on the cashier's desk and kept the money. He says, as you have heard, that as Miss Jenkins called him, George offered to take the money for him, and he saw him standing at the cashier's desk.”

“May I ask a question, sir?” said Eddie's clear, even voice.

“Yes, certainly.”

“George Long, did you not take the money from me yesterday, when I picked it up, and offer to carry it to the cashier for me?”

—o—o—o—
“No, I never did !” replied the boy, in a determined manner.

Eddie stepped back involuntarily, almost stunned by this base lie ; but quickly regained his position.

“How long have you been here, George?” he asked.

“Two days.”

“How long have I been in your service, Mr. Dates?”

“Nine months, I believe.”

“Yet I never was suspected before, and surely I have had plenty of opportunities.”

“It is of no use, Eddie,” said Mr. Dates, wearily, remembering that the boy had been lately left to himself, and concluding he had fallen into bad company. “The evidence is too strong against you ; and”—unconsciously using the boy’s words—“any one who will steal will lie to hide it. You are not more



grieved than I am, but I cannot let it pass, or it would give each one the liberty of following your example."

"Mr. Dates," said Eddie, "I can do nothing but await your decision. I have never taken a penny from you or any one; and feeling innocent, I care not for myself, or any unmerited punishment I may have to suffer. I only think of my sister, and I am afraid it will break her heart. I can say nothing in answer to your accusations, which would seem rude, for you have been most kind to me; and the Master whom you told me yesterday would never leave His children, will go with me to prison, if I must go there."

His voice was firm to the end, and his face unshaded.

Mr. Dates' eyes were on his papers. "You are dismissed," he said, without turning.

The clerks moved away, one by one, the



new boy among the first. Eddie lingered until there were but two or three left, and then walked quickly and firmly down the store, and closed the door behind him. Somebody touched his arm just outside the door, and a sobbing voice said, "Eddie, come home with me."

Eddie took his little friend's hand and clasped it so that Willie shrank with the pain. "I cannot now," he said, brokenly, "but tell your aunt that if she would like to see me, I will stop on my way home to-morrow night, if—if I am here. Good-by;" and he was gone.

He never knew how he passed over the distance between the store and Richmond-street; but once there, he rushed up-stairs, and telling Mrs. Wood's little girl, whom he met, that he had a headache and wanted no supper, he locked the door behind him, and



throwing himself on a chair, clasped his head between his hands and gasped for breath.

“O Minnie! O God, I thank thee that she is not here! Keep her safe, I beseech thee.” Thus he cried: not a word for himself—all for her; not a remembrance of his suffering, only of her sorrow; not a throb for his own loneliness, only for hers; not a sigh that he was uncared for, only that his trust was slipping from him, and his little one about to be left. It seemed to him that he would rather die. There was not a moment of this summer night that this boy did not know, waking, for it was spent partly in prayer, and the remainder to try and still his broken nerves for the morning’s work. All alone, but for God, he spent the hours, and the morning found him calm. A ray from the risen sun peeping into the narrow court, finding its way into the upper room of Mrs. Wood’s house, struck

across an open Bible held in the hands of the accused boy.

Mr. Dates was sorry to see Eddie come into the store. He had hoped that if he was guilty, he would run away, and so render the duty of punishment impossible. The thought had occurred to Eddie, during the night, but he drove it away as if an evil spirit had been near. The same quiet, dutiful cash-boy waited for orders that day, only he never smiled, and his face was perfectly free from color. Just once did he show any recollection of the previous evening. The new boy, George, came close to him, as he stood at the cashier's desk, delivering money; and as he touched him, in passing, Eddie drew back suddenly, as if his touch were death, and then instantly recovering himself, went quickly away. At night he came to Willie, and asked him if his aunt Addie would be ready



to see him. Willie answered eagerly, that she had begged that he would come, so they went away together.

Light-hearted, merry-faced Willie, did not know what to say or do, so he walked along by his friend silently. Eddie asked one or two questions, and Willie answered them, and then was still again. He looked up into Eddie's face, after one of these short answers, and saw how pained it was.

"You must not think I do not speak, because I do not feel for you, Eddie," he said, suddenly, "but I do not know what to say."

"Do you, or does your aunt Addie, believe I did it, Willie?"

"Eddie! no more than we believe my baby sister did it."

The tone was so hearty, that Eddie almost smiled, and they talked on together until they came to the gate. Then Eddie drew back. "I

Do not like to see any one who knows it," he said, nervously.

"Nonsense," said Willie; and taking him by the hand, he led him in, and not finding aunt Addie in the parlor, he conducted him through the hall into the kitchen, where she sat by the table. She looked up with such a feeling for him in her eyes, and said with so much compassion, "Poor Eddie!" that he burst into a flood of tears, and threw himself at her feet, burying his head in her lap. She smoothed his hair gently, without speaking for a few minutes, until his sobs had grown less violent, and then she soothed him with gentle words.

"I do not want you to tell me anything, Eddie," she said; "Willie has explained it, and I do not believe you guilty; but you must cheer up, my boy, and try to bear it, for Minnie's sake. God will not give you more to



bear than you can endure, and He will bring you safely out of your trouble."

Much more she said, and then gave him a nice supper in the sunny little room with the western windows. She told him, in a way which would take no refusal, that she was going to keep him all night; so after supper they sat in the deep window-sill, and Miss Addie played upon her piano and sang for them. And this boy, to whom all refinement had been denied, and yet who had tastes which longed for every pleasure which others enjoyed, drank it in and felt at home with the sweet tones.

By-and-by they were bidden good-night, and Eddie received a good-night kiss which made his lips quiver with remembered kisses long ago. The little room Miss Addie gave him was neat and pretty, and he sat down under the window, wearily to look about him,



Cash Boy.



and think of Minnie. He thought of her with quiet tears, and was thankfully glad that she was happy.

By-and-by, when he knelt down to pray, he prayed for her and for himself; but more than all to-night he prayed that his friend, whose home was beneath that roof, might be very thankful for an unstained name and a happy home. Then he laid down on the soft clean bed, and presently fell asleep; but long years after he remembered how strangely he felt, and how lying there in comfort and peace he prayed God to bless the good woman who out of the fulness of her heart, had given him help and comfort.





VI.

To Prison.

“Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”

THE life for the remainder of the week was hard in the extreme. There was nothing said to annoy him—he was simply left to himself. Only Willie spoke to him, and he was looked upon with suspicion by everybody.

The new boy, on the other hand, was taken much notice of, as though he had been insulted, and needed to be treated with extra kindness on that account.

Mr. Dates kept himself away from them all,
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for he deeply regretted the whole affair, and would rather have given five times the amount lost than be obliged to deliver anybody up to justice. He waited, in the mean while, hoping something would occur which would explain the whole thing.

On Saturday afternoon, very much against his will, Eddie went for Minnie. She was rejoiced to see him, springing towards him, and clasping him round the neck. She asked him, when she had taken his hand, if he "was quite well." He answered, "Not very well," and they went away together. No one knew how much he exerted himself that day and the next, to conceal from her that he was in trouble. He talked and laughed with her in his old manner, only with a little added tenderness, as if he had been doing her harm, and wished to repair it.

He went to the Home to church, and to



Sunday-school, and although at the former he heard the music and the sermon, which was a quiet little talk that they all could understand, yet his distress weighed upon him while the child-like form of his little sister was so continually before him.

He saw Mrs. Dates, as he was entering the Sunday-school room, and approaching her, he lifted his hat. "May I speak with you a moment, ma'am?" he asked.

She looked at him, without knowing who he was, and said, "Certainly."

"My name is Eddie Horton. I wish to ask, if you know of my trouble, that you will be good enough not to speak of it to Minnie."

He changed color as he spoke, and only steadied himself by a glance at his little sister, as she sat in her class.

Mrs. Dates was surprised and touched. "I have heard about it," she said, "and am very

sorry. I will say nothing to Minnie, if you do not wish it."

She moved on to her place, but, through the afternoon, she often looked toward Eddie, and studied the grave face.

Eddie felt that he needed comfort, and listened more intently than ever to his teacher's earnest words. The young man noted the anxious face, and although he said nothing to him personally, he talked of the Saviour's love, until Eddie's heart was stilled.

"To think how the Master suffered, and then that I should be cast down!" thought Eddie. "I will bear it for His sake." He lingered after the class was dismissed, and thanked his teacher for his words. He received a warm hand clasp, and "It is always pleasant to tell the Saviour's message, Eddie." On the teacher's record book Eddie had seen him pencil his address, and glancing down now,



he noted it anew, and observed it was No. 412, Twenty-third street.

"I'll remember that," said the boy to himself.

As the young teacher went away, thinking over the afternoon's work, the boy's face haunted him, even after he had reached home, and had dismissed the thought of his class from his mind. "I wonder if he is in trouble," he thought: "I wish I had asked him when he stopped to speak with me."

Mrs. Dates, too, walked home thinking of the troubled face. She stood afterwards in the parlor of her house, by the mirror, taking off her bonnet, as her son came in.

"John," said she, "nothing can make me believe that Eddie Horton is guilty of that theft."

"Why, mother!" exclaimed the young man, "what do you mean?"



“I saw him for the first time this afternoon, and I think I never observed a more pitiful face. I don’t believe it.”

“But, mother, the proofs are against him.”

“Nevertheless, my son, I do not believe it.”

Monday morning early, Eddie took his little sister back to the Home. “Be a good girl, Minnie,” he said, kissing her with lips which trembled very much, “and do not forget me.”

“Forget you, Eddie!” she said, “as if I could. I only wish it was Saturday again.”

“Do you indeed, dear?” he asked, dreading to leave her. “Why not take her and run away?” whispered the evil spirit. Eddie started, kissed her again, and hastily saying “Good-by, dear little girl!” was away down the street in a minute, too far to hear her calling after him.

He lifted his hat, brushed his hair back from his forehead, damp with the perspiration



which had gathered there, and replaced it, wondering if in the life that was before him, there could come two more difficult days than those just passed.

He opened the store door, and was passing along, without looking up, when Mr. Dates' voice said: "Eddie," and he stopped to find his employer standing at his elbow with an officer beside him.

"Eddie," he said, gravely, "I find it is useless to wait longer, so you must go with the officer now."

"Very well, sir," replied Eddie, bowing slightly, and deadly pale. "May I shake hands with you, sir?"

The gentleman reached out his hand. "This is not good-by," he said, hurriedly, and not very clearly. "I am coming down in a few minutes."

"Down?" hesitated Eddie.

—○○○○—
“To the station house—yes.”

They walked away quietly, the officer allowing the boy to proceed by himself. Just outside the store door, they met Willie. Eddie stopped him from a loud cry, by a hand placed quickly on his mouth.

“Hush, Willie! Will you be kind enough to go and see Minnie on Saturday, and tell her why I do not come? Not before Saturday, mind.”

“Yes,” said the boy, trying to keep from crying. “O Eddie, what shall I do!” and breaking away from him, Willie rushed into the store.

The boy’s lips trembled slightly.

“Where is your sister?” asked the officer.

“At the Pilgrim-street Orphan Home, sir.”

“Did you commit this theft?” he asked, wondering at himself for the question, but somehow relying upon the honest face before him.

—o—o—o—
“No sir,” simply and quietly replied Eddie.

The officer looked at him sharply a moment, and then spoke to him about something else, and made him talk. He kept some distance from his charge, and they talked pleasantly together.

Eddie did not understand it at first, but as they drew nearer the station and the officer ceased to talk, he saw that he had been shielded carefully, during their walk, from the observation of the street throng.

“You have done a kind act for me, sir, and I thank you for it,” said Eddie, earnestly.

After reaching the station, they had but a few minutes to wait, for Mr. Dates soon arrived, and after an examination before the magistrate, from which Eddie shrunk, and in which there were many words, and much confusion, without any degree of system, he



was temporarily locked in one of the station-house cells.

There he passed the night, trying to sleep on the hard boards given him for a bed, and repeatedly awakened by the screams of a drunken woman who occupied an adjoining cell.

Early in the forenoon of the next day, he was led out by an officer and placed in a carriage, containing three miserable wretches who evidently well-deserved the punishment awaiting them, and together they rode to the prison..

The heavy iron doors opened for them, and they passed into a damp, stone porch, from which another gate led them to the main building, in which was the warder's office. There they stopped. Very little was said to Eddie. The officer in charge told his story, gave his name and age, and then turning to

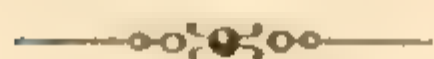


Eddie, bade him give up the contents of his pocket. He did so, producing a pocket-handkerchief, a knife, and a key.

The handkerchief was tossed back to him, and the other things retained. He was then handed over to the keeper, who took him roughly by the shoulder, and drawing him along a stone-paved corridor, unlocked a cell and bade him enter.

Having done this, he locked and double-locked the door behind him, and Eddie heard his steps going far away down the corridor, until they were lost in the distance.

The boy drew a long, heavy sigh, and paced up and down the cell, letting all the pain and weariness, which had been in his heart, show itself in his face and manner. He was all alone now; no look or tone of his could harm Minnie here; no one was present to suspect by his worn face that he was guilty: he could do



nothing but wait God's time and stand in God's presence, and he was not afraid to do either. He stopped his walk, after a while, and looked about him. The small stone cell contained a bedstead with blankets upon it, a shelf or bench fastened to the sides by rivets, and four bare stone walls. It was lighted by an aperture two feet long and eight inches wide, barred with iron. The sides of the cell were daubed with letters and rude drawings, as if some weary prisoner had whiled away the hours in copying remembered faces.

Eddie wondered vaguely how long this would be his home, and then fell to walking up and down, up and down again. He grew tired presently, and laid down upon the bed ; but it was so foul that he sprang up with an exclamation of horror. He walked awhile longer, and then, wearied as much with the long strain of mind as with bodily weakness,



he spread his handkerchief beneath his head upon the bed, and turning his face towards the window—if it might bear the name—so that he might have whatever air came in, he thought on his position.

The first thing that came to him was a deep feeling of thankfulness. He reflected, with a thrill of horror, how awful a silence like this must seem to a guilty person, left with only his own thoughts and the Spirit's accusing voice—with not a sound to attract the ear, and only the memory of a base crime for company.

The most grateful feelings crept over Eddie, as he lay there, that his thoughts, if they were sorrowful, were not remorseful; and that placed as he was, upon God's all-powerful arm, he had no need to fear anything. He prayed very earnestly that God would protect his little sister and deliver him; and while he



prayed that the Infinite Compassion might visit the heart of the boy who had caused him to be brought here, he gave sincere and heartfelt thanks that he was innocent of the crime of which he had been accused. He felt so much strength and trust when he had ended his prayer, and so much faith in a pitying Saviour, that he smiled to himself and fell into a quiet, peaceful sleep.

Two or three hours after, the rattling of keys in the lock of his cell awakened him, and he sat up on his bed with his face turned toward the door. It opened to admit one of the keepers, who placed a plate of boiled beef and potatoes, with a piece of bread, upon the shelf before mentioned, and turning to Eddie, told him that from a faucet in the wall he could draw the water.

“I have no cup,” said Eddie.

“Well, you will have to do without one



until supper-time. Ha! ha! couldn't ye sleep without a handkerchief under yer head?" added the man, pointing to the bed.

"It was so dirty, I couldn't help it," apologized Eddie.

"A thief shouldn't mind dirt," laughed the keeper.

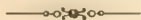
Eddie flushed, but did not answer, and the man went away.

He ate his dinner, and then, putting his mouth beneath the faucet, boy-fashion, took a long draught of fresh water. It refreshed him very much, and he paced up and down until he could tell that it was growing late in the afternoon, by the lengthening shadows of the bars of his window. It commenced to grow dark early in the cell, and when the keeper brought his supper, and a cup, it was almost too dark to see his food. He ate it, however, although a little less heartily than his noon



meal, and then sat down on his bench to watch the daylight die away. He sat there watching, and singing to himself, until he could only tell the sky from the bars of his window, by a bright little star which peeped in at him. Then he said his evening prayer, kneeling where he could see this little comforter, and then lay down on his wretched bed, cheered and trustful.

In the next cell to that occupied by the orphan boy—left without earthly parents, but tenderly cared for by his Father in Heaven—was a man who was guilty of burglary, and who had been captured while trying to make his escape. As night came on, and shrouded his cell in darkness, he rushed from one side to the other, afraid to be alone, dashing himself against the wall as if he would gladly tear it down; climbing up and shaking the bars of the windows, until the tender flesh of his hands



was raw and bleeding. He drew the filthy blankets of his bed around his body and head, striving to drive away thought, but in a moment he would toss them off and throw them from him with a cry of despair. When the keeper brought his supper, he received him with dreadful words, and threw the plate from him, scattering the contents over the cell. He lay down at length, wearied with the struggle. But after he had fallen into a doze he awoke chilled and trembling, and cried out as if he thought that he might die.

Eddie Horton lay awake also in the night, but his thoughts were with the Friend whom he knew to be his Friend, and the soothing sense of this thought stilled him and made the waking hours anything but dismal.

In happy ignorance of all this, little Minnie lived her life of work and play at the Home, dutiful and obedient, but I do not think she



was ever quite happy. She learned to look back upon the days in Richmond-street, and her companions in the alley, with aversion and dread, and grew quite gentle with her new companions. She laughed and played with the little girls, as gay and lively as any one of them; she sang in the great school-room, helped to wipe the dishes in the kitchen after the meals, swept down the stairs, recited little lessons, and knelt in the chapel with the rest: but she was lonely always. After the games were over, the songs sung, the dishes washed, the stairs swept, the lessons recited, and the chapel service ended—after each and all of these, she sat forlorn, with her head upon her hand, thinking with too grave a face for a little girl. The teacher and the matron were too busy to see how one little child differed from another, and where the life of constant monotony might be good for one it was not for

all. They could not tarry in their unceasing round of duties to think that there might be a few children among the many who did not feel quite happy enough to go to sleep at night without a "good-night," word, and that they might lie awake wanting it. It was so with little Maggie, in her patient days and nights of pain; and it was so with Minnie, who, as a reward for good conduct, had leave to sit by her and to watch the restless eyes of the sick child. The two children talked together a great deal, and each in her way received good influences from the other. Minnie sang to her companion some sweet little hymns, taught her in the school, and Maggie, in return, talked of the loving Saviour to whom she was going, and so each drew nearer heaven.

The matron very kindly went from couch to couch, speaking gentle words to the sick children and to Minnie; but little Maggie's back



felt more tender, and her limbs more cramped when she missed the loving smile and kiss which she could remember in the days which seemed so far away. And Minnie thought of Eddie, and wished she could tell him how hard her lessons were—wished for Saturday.

During the week which commenced with the Monday when he had left her so sorrowfully, and which was such a strange week of idleness and constant thought to him, she wished more than ever for the Saturday to come. It was the warm, close weather of mid-summer, and the Home was as cool and pleasant as it was possible to make it; but even when loitering in the cool corridors, or under the shady trees of the lawn, Minnie wished for Eddie, and would have endured willingly the stifling air of Richmond-street, if she could only have been with him. Her little friend Maggie was so ill that she could only see her for a few moments



at a time, and her tasks wearied her. She looked in vain for Mrs. Dates, who had been to see her a second time, and her little feet moved languidly about the house. The only place where she was quite happy was the chapel. She was never behindhand there, but when the bell struck, was one of the first to move toward the great doors and open them. The hymns cheered her, and when they knelt in prayer it seemed as if Eddie was there with her.

How joyfully she opened her eyes on Saturday morning, and how the first sound of the bell made her spring up! The morning seemed endless, and when at noon she was released to change her dress, she danced up the stairs as she had not done for a long time. When the clean white dress and apron were arranged, just as Eddie liked to see them, she went out of the house and sat down on the top



of a long flight of steps, where she could see far down the street. There she watched while the sun moved westward, her little heart beating fast when any one came in view, and sinking when she saw it was not the one she wanted.

There was another watcher very near her in spirit, if she had only known it; and his grieved face seemed to see her sitting on the steps, as he gazed through his narrow window out into the sunlight.

Presently Minnie saw some one whom she recognized as Eddie coming up the street, and running to the foot of the steps—as far as she was allowed to go. She clapped her hands and danced up and down as she waited for him to come. As he approached, she saw in a moment that it was not Eddie, but Willie. She seized his hand as he came soberly up to her.



"Oh, where is Eddie?" she cried, anxiously.

"Eddie can't come this afternoon," replied the little boy, hurriedly, "and Aunt Addie meant to have come, only Aunt Martha is sick, and she couldn't leave her."

The boy was perplexed and heart-sick; at a perfect loss how to break the sad news.

"But where *is* Eddie?" asked Minnie again, almost crying.

"He thought it best for you to stay here to-morrow," replied Willie, "and he hopes you will try and get along without him."

"Is he sick, Willie?"

"No only he couldn't come."

"O Willie, tell me why!" begged the little girl.

Willie drew her down on the stone step, and put his arm about her. "God knows best, little Minnie," he said, brokenly, "and when I tell you that Eddie is in prison for



stealing money, and cannot come to you, you must believe that God will bring him safely out again."

"Willie! Willie! Eddie in prison! Oh, the wicked people who put him in! He didn't steal, Willie, did he?"

"No, Minnie, no. Be quiet—it will all be right soon."

But the little girl cried and sobbed, and threw herself down on the stone steps. In vain Willie tried to soothe her, and in vain he told her that they would only be separated for a little while : she shook her head, and cried, and spoke her brother's name over and over.

Just then Mrs. Dates coming up the walk from her carriage, heard her voice, and without knowing who the children were, walked rapidly towards them to see what was the matter. "Why are you crying, little girl?" she asked, bending down to her.

—o—o—o—
“I had to bring her bad news, ma’am,” said Willie, touching his cap, and looking gravely at the lady.

Minnie heard the voice, turned her head, and seeing who it was, sprang towards her.

“Oh, Mrs. Dates, my poor dear brother!” she cried, clinging to the lady’s dress.

“It is Minnie Horton! Poor little girl!” she said, pitifully, lifting her into her arms, and soothing her. “You shall come with me, dear, and I will take care of you. Tell me who this is who came to bring you word about Eddie.”

“Eddie sent me, ma’am,” replied Willie for her. “I am his friend, and one of Mr. Dates’ cash-boys.”

“Very well; you have done quite right. You may go now, and I will take care of Minnie.”

“Wait a moment, please, Mrs. Dates,” said



Minnie, lifting her head. "I must see Willie a moment;" and forgetful of her own trouble, she released herself from Mrs. Dates' hold, and lifted her tearful eyes to Willie. "It was very kind of you to come, Willie," she said. "Good-by! Give my—my love—to Eddie;" and crying out afresh, she ran back to Mrs. Dates, who lifted her gently and carried her into the house.





VII.

Kind Visitors.

“God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.”

AS Mrs. Dates stepped through the hall, with Minnie still sobbing in her arms, she met one of the older girls, crossing the corridor quickly, with her apron pressed against her face.

“Mary Jackson,” said the lady, quickly, “I wish you would stop a moment.—Why! what are you crying for?” she exclaimed, as the girl dropped her apron, and disclosed a face red with weeping.

“Little Maggie Burns has just died, ma’am,” she said, brokenly, “and oh! the patience,
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the sweet calmness and the beautiful words, were worth being there to hear, Mrs. Dates, ma'am."

So Mrs. Dates, looking very grave, and still carrying Minnie, who, stilled by what she had heard, was asking frightened questions, left the main hall and ascended the staircase to the infirmary.

The matron of the Home and one of the assistants were bending over the bed of little Maggie Burns.

As Mrs. Dates approached, they stood aside so that she could come nearer.

The little body, from which the soul had fled, was lying on the bed, just in the position she had herself taken when she died.

"The little sufferer is at rest," said Mrs. Dates, in a low tone, and then she spoke to the little girl whom she held, and who was gazing upon her little friend in timid awe.

—o—o—o—
“Little Maggie has gone to God, Minnie,” she said.

Minnie smiled gently. It did not seem a sad thing to her, that her playmate had obtained that which she had desired above all earthly things.

“What is the matter with Minnie?” asked the matron.

Mrs. Dates explained briefly, and then added that she wished to take Minnie home with her.

“Very well, ma’am,” replied the matron, “only you will have to see Mr. Brown before she goes. He will be at home at chapel-time.”

“Then I will remain,” said Mrs. Dates, so she put Minnie down beside little Maggie’s bed, and went away to visit other children full of pain.

Minnie looked at the little form before her,

—o-o-o-o—
with the tears running down her face, not daring to cry aloud, but sobbing often. Not for her friend—she knew by words so often spoken there that she was glad to be released; she only felt for her brother, and wept that he should be obliged to endure so much. The idea that he might be guilty never entered her mind after her first hurried question to Willie. She wondered if Mrs. Dates really intended to take her home with her, and if she did, when she should see her brother again—if the children would all have to know of it—and if she could go and see Eddie. Presently it flashed across her mind that she might shield her brother if she grew calm and quiet, and with some of the same resolution which he had shown, she stilled her sobs, and sat silently waiting.

After some time had elapsed the bell rung for supper. “You had better go down, Min-

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nie," said Mrs. Dates. "I will see you after chapel."

Minnie would much rather have remained where she was, but fearing she might give them some trouble, she went slowly down the staircase, holding on to the balusters and letting the merry children pass her. They looked in her sober, tear-stained face, and remembering how fond she had been of little Maggie, supposed she had been weeping for her, and so passed by without asking any questions.

Her bowl of bread and milk stood untouched beside her plate, and she went away without having tasted a mouthful. She was very thankful to creep into her seat in chapel and be quiet for a little while. The Superintendent came in and took his seat, the organ sounded, and the children rose to sing their evening hymn.



Minnie joined too. She felt the need of the Almighty arm thrown around her, and she craved heavenly strength, for she felt all alone but for God. The hymn soothed her not more than the prayer which followed, and which, notwithstanding its associations with Eddie and her mother, brought a sense of the care and tender compassion of a pitying Saviour for this poor lonely child.

Many of the orphan girls, seeing her as she joined Mrs. Dates after chapel, and knowing she was going to the lady's home, thought she was a very fortunate little girl, and wished themselves in her place; but Minnie took Mrs. Dates' hand silently, and as they passed out through the long hall to the carriage, she thought only of her brother's loneliness, and their dependence on Our Father's care.

They found a dainty supper spread for them in Mrs. Dates' pretty tea-room, and young



John Dates in waiting. His mother told him why she had brought Minnie home, and then bade her go and speak to him.

She went up and put out her hand. He took it and asked her if she thought she should like to stay with them ?

"I don't know, sir," she replied ; "I hope so, for Mrs. Dates is very good. But did you put Eddie in prison?"

"Yes, Minnie, I had to do so."

She slipped her hand from his quickly, and went and stood near his mother, looking at him, but keeping far away.

He smiled, and then asked her if she was afraid of him.

She said, "No, sir," but still stood some distance from him. Mrs. Dates placed her at the table, and gave her some fine peaches to eat. She sat eating them slowly, with no smile of pleasure, to show that they were the



first she had tasted for the season; and every now and then the dark eyes were fastened on John Dates' face. Presently it commenced to annoy him, and turning toward her, he asked: "Minnie, why do you look at me so steadily? Am I different from other people?"

"I am sorry, sir," replied the little girl, with the offending eyes bent upon her plate.

"I was only wondering how you could do it."

"Do what?"

"Put Eddie in prison."

"Why, my dear little girl, I did not wish to do so, but he took fifty dollars from the store."

She shook her head very sadly. "I do not believe that a boy who loves to please God, as well as Eddie does, could do such a thing."

The young man did not reply, but looked at her with a face full of wonder.



Mrs. Dates put her young charge in a pretty little room, next her own, and for the succeeding three or four days used all her skill to make her happy and contented. For her own pleasure she arrayed Minnie in new and delicate dresses, curled her hair, and took much trouble to make her look dainty and pretty. She satisfied herself alone. Minnie looked down upon the pretty things and up again with the same grave face.

The tiny, close-fitting shoes suited her, and the nice taste which she had from her mother made her at home in the delicate cambric dresses. She put all enjoyment of these, and the long rides Mrs. Dates gave her daily, out of her reach. "When Eddie is at home again," was her constant thought; and she seemed not to care where home was, so long as Eddie was confined in prison.

Early in the week Mr. Dates and his mother



went to see Eddie in prison, leaving Minnie at home. The keeper looked at the lady and gentleman in some surprise, when he learned whom they had come to visit, and led the way to Eddie's cell. As the heavy door swung on its hinges, Eddie stood up surprised, and then flushed very deeply when he saw whom it was.

"Mr. Dates," he said, as the gentleman offered him his hand, "this is very kind of you, sir.—Mrs. Dates, I wish I could offer you a better seat," he added, looking round, painfully aware of his situation.

"Never mind, I will sit here ;" said the lady, seating herself on the rough bench.

Eddie and Mr. Dates remained standing. It touched the gentleman not a little to observe the nice care that the boy had taken that everything about himself should be clean and neat. Mr. Dates had never seen his hair



smoother or his jacket more free from dust, although it would have puzzled him to have discovered how he managed it, had he known that the boy had neither comb nor brush. The boy stood with his hands clasped behind him, with the same frank, pleasant smile to which his face had been used.

"You look well, Eddie," said Mr. Dates.

"Yes, sir, I am very well," replied the boy; and then, after a moment, he said, "May I ask you one question, sir? Do you know anything of Minnie? She is my most anxious thought."

"She is safe at our house," replied Mrs. Dates. "I took her home with me on Saturday. You need feel no further uneasiness with regard to her."

"Your house!" exclaimed the boy. "Oh, how kind to care for her, when you think I have injured you! "Oh, how I thank God for this goodness!"



He turned away a moment, brushing his hand over his eyes. Only a moment, and then he was calm and very cheerful.

"Eddie, I wish this matter were at an end," said Mr. Dates wearily, walking to and fro, across the cell.

"So do I, sir, but I can wait."

"Are you so sure of being cleared?" asked Mrs. Dates.

"God knows, ma'am. He may choose to keep me here, although I am innocent. My time is His."

The words were spoken with a grave steadiness of voice which knew no faltering. They talked some time longer, and then Mr. Dates turned to go. It made him uneasy and unhappy to stay there.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Eddie?" he asked, as he said good-by.

"There is something Mrs. Dates can do for



me, if she will be so good," replied Eddie, turning to her.

"Bring Minnie to see you? Ah! do not ask me that," said the lady gravely.

"No madam," returned Eddie, flushing, "I would not have Minnie see me here. I do not wish it. I thought to ask you, if you know my Sunday-school teacher, Mr. James Dayton, and if so, whether you would ask him to come and see me? His address is 412 Twenty-third street."

"I know him well, Eddie, and it will give me great pleasure to ask him. Good-by."

"Thank you, ma'am. Good-by. Give my love to my dear little sister. I feel so happy in knowing where she is."

They went away, and Eddie was again alone. He was accustomed to solitude, now that he had been over a week in the narrow cell, and had counted every seam in the stones



and every mark upon the walls. He had learned very much since he had been alone here, but perhaps more than all, he had learned to prize the store of Bible verses which in the days now gone forever the struggling mother had taught her son. There were memories of her clinging all about the words, as they came back to his mind, every day more and more of them. Whole chapters, which he thought had been forgotten, were recalled verse by verse, to his mind, until they were complete. Little hymns and scraps of lessons, with almost every word of the teachings of the three Sundays at the Home, passed and repassed through his mind, as the morning wore away to noon, and the cell grew close and warm; and as the brightness passed away, and the day faded into night.

He had received no visits until the one from



Mr. Dates and his mother, but their words left an opportunity for long quiet enjoyment after they had gone. The cell had seemed to contain nothing but himself before, but now the air seemed full of the voices which had spoken, and the loneliness with which he was troubled now and then almost passed away. It had not an opportunity to return again, for the next day his Sunday-school teacher came.

“I did not expect you so soon, sir,” said the boy, gratefully, meeting him just inside the door.

“I would have come before, if I had known you were here; but it was only this morning that Mrs. Dates rode down to my office, and a dear little girl came in to tell me she wished to see me a moment. When I went out she told me you wished to see me, and was about to explain how you came here, but I asked

her to allow me to hear it from you first. Now tell me how it all came about."

The words were so kindly and heartily spoken, that Eddie had no hesitation in telling the whole story; which he did, sitting upon the side of his bed, with his clear eyes fixed upon his teacher's face.

The young man listened and judged, coming to the conclusion that the boy could not be guilty. He felt the more decided on this point, because Eddie would blame no one for his confinement.

"Mr. Dates think so, Mr. Dayton, and you know it would not do to let such an act go unpunished."

He asked Eddie a few questions as to his thoughts since he had been confined in his cell. It moved him not a little to find that *his* teachings had been so stamped on the boy's mind. Eddie told him also of his sister,



and of the kind hands into which she had fallen.

“How plainly God’s hand is in it all,” said Mr. Dayton. “He has been leading us all, my dear boy; let us thank Him together.”

He knelt, and with the boy’s hand clasped in his, poured out such a prayer of praise and deep thanksgiving that the room was filled with its melody, and Eddie felt as if he was almost at Heaven’s gate.

Mr. Dayton stood with his hand on Eddie’s shoulder after they rose. “It is strange, Eddie,” he said, “how God makes everything to work for our good. I had a poor brother who was once confined in this same prison on a charge of forgery, of which he was guilty, poor boy. He has gone away from earth now,” he added, gravely, “but I learned from his stay here all the needs of prisoners, and I feel acquainted with the Warden. He gave me



leave this morning to send you a basket of various things which you are sure to want. It will be brought to you with your supper, and I hope the daylight will be long enough for you to see the contents. I am coming soon again—before the week is over. Good-by, now.”

“Good-night, sir,” replied Eddie. “You have made me very happy.”

The little basket came with the supper, both sent a trifle earlier by means of certain bits of paper dropped into the keeper’s hand as Mr. Dayton passed out.

Eddie unpacked it with a feeling of affection for the giver, growing stronger and stronger every moment. A few fresh peaches and pears were laid upon the top, and underneath them two soft white towels, some soap, a brush and comb, a clean white shirt just his size (Eddie wondered how he knew, and where



it came from), two or three story books, a Bible, and a book of texts for daily use. How much he enjoyed them all can hardly be told. It seemed to him, as he stood the next morning neatly dressed beneath his window, reading a chapter in his Bible, that if all the blessings he desired for Mr. Dayton should descend upon him, he would have nothing left to wish for.

Late in the week—oh! what a dreary week to some in the prison, and what a joyous waiting for God's time to the innocent boy—came Miss Addie and Willie. Only illness had detained them from coming long before, she said; but they atoned for the delay by giving Eddie the benefit of a whole hour with him. Willie had so much to tell about the store, and Eddie of the kindly visits he had received, and of Minnie's new home. Miss Addie's sweet face and pleasant voice were



constant reminders of that fearful evening when she had so tenderly soothed him, and afterwards sent him to sleep in the little room which was ever after his ideal of the beauty of living.

Willie told him that Mr. Dates kept a constant watch over the cash-boys, and was moving in and out among them every day. He seemed to suspect some one, Willie said, and looked anxious.

Eddie thought much about this after they had gone, and hoped, in his gentle forgiving way, that Mr. Dates was not troubling himself too much about the matter, so that it would make him unhappy.

When Mr. Dates came to see him again on Saturday, if he had been troubling himself about that or anything else, he left it all behind him when he entered the prison, and was so smiling and glad to see Eddie that the



boy ceased to feel anxious on his account. He brought a tiny note from Minnie, which she had taken a vast amount of pains to print herself. Eddie took it tenderly, saying, in apology for a tear that started: "You know, sir, mother trusted her to me." The note ran thus:

"DEAR BROTHER:

"I want to see you so much. Mrs. Dates is very kind, and when you come back I shall be a happy little girl. When I lie down on my soft bed at night I think of you and cry myself to sleep.

"To EDDIE, from his loving sister

"MINNIE."

"Is it as she says?" asked Eddie, folding the note softly and putting it between the leaves of his Bible. "Does she mourn after me, poor little girl?"



"I am afraid she does," returned Mr. Dates. "I told her to-day, when she cried to come with me, that if she could see your bright face she would not mourn. She will scarcely speak to me, because I am the cause of your being here. Your trial is to take place the last of next week, Eddie. I wish I had the power, and I would open these doors and let you go. I am beginning to doubt my own wisdom in bringing you here so soon."

"Mr. Dates! No sir! I would not leave here until you have *proved* me innocent. I am only very much rejoiced that you do not suspect me as strongly as you did at one time. Give dear Minnie my love, and tell her that I am quite happy, and that I want her to try and enjoy the pretty things about her, and to love you, who have been so good to me in my trouble."

The young man went home feeling that he



might learn a lesson from the boy whom he suspected. He gave Minnie the message, which she heard with wide open eyes.

"I would like to enjoy all the beautiful things Mrs. Dates gives me," she said, "and if Eddie is really happy I will try : although it does not seem quite right," she added, with a glance at the table loaded with glass, silver, and rich food, and remembering what Eddie's deprivations were.

"How about learning to love me?" asked the gentleman, smiling ; "that was a part of Eddie's message."

He had grown very fond of the gentle little girl, and felt her avoidance of him more than she knew.

In answer to his question, she turned round and round upon her finger a little gold ring which Mrs. Dates had given her, shook her head, and did not reply.



He reached out his hand and drew her to him.

"Dear Minnie, I don't believe now that Eddie took the money."

"Then why do you keep him in prison, sir?" asked the loving sister.

"Because he is unwilling to come out until I can prove, by finding the right thief, that he is not guilty. Do you understand?"

"That's a good Eddie!" said the little girl, comprehending at once; "and for his sake, Mr. Dates," she added, looking up at him, "I will try very hard to like you better."

And that was all that he could get. She went back into the parlor, and tried for the remainder of the day and evening to be happy and to enjoy her pretty dress, the flower-trimmed parlor, and Mrs. Dates' sweet music. Upon that lady herself Minnie lavished a heart full of love. It pleased them both that she



was so happy. But after she had laid down on her tiny bedstead, robed in a clean night-dress, and fresh from a bath, she thought of her only brother walking to and fro in his dark cell, without a word of cheer, and she turned her head on the pillow and sobbed until she fell asleep. It was vain to attempt it; she could not be happy while Eddie was in prison.

At the same hour her brother moved his bed a little out from the wall, so that when he lay down he could look through the bars and see the little friendly star. He watched it, wondering if it was in such a starry night that the angels sang to the shepherds—thinking of the great and good Shepherd, and His love for His flock—fondly thinking of the one little lamb whom he prayed might have the Shepherd's kindest care, and secretly very happy and thankful to be numbered among those to



whom the Lord Jesus had spoken when he said, "Fear not, little flock."

There was no need for the wakeful sister to weep for him—ah! no need! There was not in that broad city a soul more full of peace than that of Eddie Horton, lying upon a hard bed in the city prison, looking out upon the stars.





VIII.

A Discovery and a Deliberance.

“Earth has no sorrow which heaven cannot heal.”

WILLIE had a crotchet in his brain, Aunt Addie said, and it really seemed so. For three or four days after his visit to the prison he went about the store with his brow wrinkled and his mouth all drawn up in a pucker. The strangest thing was that he would tell no one what he was puzzling himself about, but kept his own counsel. Aunt Addie laughed when she found him, after dark, with both hands in his pockets, looking fixedly out of a window into space, or

lying at full length on a lounge, and looking at the flies on the ceiling, as if to see if it were really atmospheric pressure which enabled them to cling there. He laughed when she asked him about it, and told her he was trying to find his way out of a puzzle.

Had Aunt Addie seen him in the store, she would have wondered still more at his manner, for he seemed to watch the movements of every one who came in his way. Not a moment of his leisure time found him idle, but standing or lounging near some cash-boy, he watched every motion, and listened to every word.

One morning, early in the following week, it happened that the hands were all so busily employed in unpacking new goods, that the morning's mail was forgotten. When Mr. Dates discovered this, he looked up hurriedly, and annoyed at finding no one whom he could

—•••—
send, he hastily called across the store for the new cash-boy.

"George," he said, so loud that all in the immediate neighborhood heard him, "I have no morning's mail. Go and get it, but come back as quickly as possible; and here, drop these letters."

Willie heard the order, and saw the boy depart. For some time after he was kept busy, but his mind was very far from his work, and he moved about quickly, anxious to be released. Finally he was told "That is all, at present;" and springing to the back end of the store, he picked up Mr. Dates' little pet kitten, that came running toward him, and fondled it against his face. "Kitty, I am going to do something very naughty," he whispered, in a low tone.

Kitty only crept closer and purred very loud.

“I know you don’t want me to do wrong, kitty,” he said, “but I must, this time. Shall I put you down?”

But pussy had no idea of going away, and clung closer. Just then the clock struck eleven. Down went kitty in a hurry on the floor, and up the stairs sprang Willie to the wholesale rooms above; further on still, to the third floor, where the winter goods were stored, and where the noises all sounded afar off. At the end of this great room there was a small partitioned apartment, formerly used for the watchman, and now occupied by the boy whom Mr. Dates had picked up, and out of charity given the position of cash-boy. To the door of this room Willie went, and cautiously pushing it open, passed in. There was an iron bedstead in the corner, a chair, a box, and a little round table. Willie hurriedly tore everything off the bed, shook the sheets and



blankets, shook the bed itself, and tumbled it off on to the floor, and then back again. He left everything as he had found it, and then hurrying to the box, he pulled the contents out of it. His fingers slipped over the soiled and torn garments, while a feeling of disgust made him screw his face into a grimace. He reached the bottom, and then piled them back with a little disappointment on his face.

He then examined the table, the bales of goods which formed one of the partitions, shook the pillows, and then heaved a deep sigh. He was just going away, when up in a corner, where the bales met the wooden partition, he saw a crevice, and into this he thrust his hand. He pulled it out again with a low cry of joy. A little brown purse was there ; and as the trembling fingers unloosed the clasp, he found a piece of white paper, and inside of it five ten dollar notes ; and the slip

of paper was Miss Jenkins' record, in her own handwriting.

Willie hastily laid them back, and then ran down-stairs with all his might. The clerks in the second story whistled to him and asked him where he was going so fast, but they received no answer, and he hurried on. Into the lower room he dashed, just in time to see Mr. Dates going towards the door, hat in hand.

"O, Mr. Dates!" he called aloud across the room, "please sir, wait a minute! I've found the fifty dollars!"

The unusually loud voice caused the clerks to look up in astonishment. The men who were hammering boxes held their tools suspended, the customers stopped, and Mr. Dates started and turned round.

"Who spoke?" he demanded.

"I, sir," replied Willie, hurrying toward him.



“I’ve found the fifty dollars!” His face was flushed and eager.

“Where is it, my boy?” asked the pleased merchant, putting down his hat, and looking as if a load had been lifted from his mind.

“Just where I found it, sir. I will take you to see for yourself, if you will come.”

“Certainly I will,” he replied, reaching out his hand eagerly to the boy; “take me to the spot.”

Willie led the way, and they went the length of the store, followed by curious eyes. Up the stairs they went, Mr. Dates following every movement of his quick conductor. As, obeying the motion of Willie’s hand, they turned up the second flight of stairs, Mr. Dates drew back.

“Don’t tell me it was that boy!” he said, nervously. “I saved him from ruin! He would not do it! The most grievous wrong

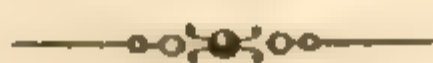


with which I charged Eddie was that he should wrong the innocent!"

"I will only show you what I found, sir. You may judge for yourself," replied Willie.

They went into the little room, and Willie silently took out the purse, the money, and the paper, with Miss Jenkins' statement upon it.

"Mr. Dates," said Willie, in a low voice, "I have been watching this for days; and George's uneasy movements, and one or two other things, made me suspect him. Miss Jenkins always writes with a hard pencil, as you see this record, and I was near enough to you the night you held the one which was deposited at the desk to see that it was written with a soft pencil, in very black marks. When you called George, he was scribbling on a piece of paper, and dropped it and his pencil when he came forward. I picked up both, and found a soft pencil with his name cut in



the wood, and handwriting the same as the record you held. Here they are. I came up here to-day, when you sent him to the post-office, and after I had shaken the bed and turned out the contents of his box, and was just coming away disappointed, I discovered this little hole, and putting in my hand drew this purse out."

"My boy," said Mr. Dates, "I am heartily glad of this. George is a thief, a liar, and a coward too; for he was willing to see that brave boy sent to prison, while he lived upon my charity. You did well to search, and you deserve a handsome reward. What shall it be?"

"It shall be, sir, to see Eddie taken away from prison immediately, if you please."

"You shall see that very soon. We must only wait for George to return. Do not say a word down-stairs, for a while. I will make it

all right by-and-by. As for Eddie, brave boy, we will see him released very quickly."

When they came down again, Mr. Dates went to Miss Jenkins, and comparing the different papers, found that Eddie's statement had been entirely correct. The pale pencilling had its fac-simile in her record-book, and the black she denied all knowledge of ever having seen. She seemed very much concerned about it, for she felt that she had blamed Eddie very unjustly. Mr. Dates sent for an officer, and then waited with some impatience the arrival of George. Presently the door opened and the boy came in. One instant's glance told him the whole story, and he turned to rush out of the door again. But the officer's hand was on his shoulder, and Mr. Dates' spoke:

"George, you must learn that the wicked never escape. You must go with this officer and take Eddie's place."



The boy cried, and begged, and pleaded his poverty. Mr. Dates barely listened to it, and told him in reply that his chance was gone. He might as well have talked to empty walls ; and after a moment longer, Mr. Dates stopped him, and ordered the officer to take him away without more words.

He did so, and conducted him along the streets with so firm a hand on his jacket collar, that, much as he struggled and cursed, he could not escape.

“What did he do?” asked a little girl, looking up into the officer’s face.

“He stole money, and almost ruined the character of a good, true boy,” replied the officer, who was angry with the boy’s resistance, and well remembered the quiet words and respectful manner of Eddie Horton.

In the mean while Mr. Dates called a carriage, and rode to the station-house, arriving

some minutes in advance of the officer who had George in custody.

He was disappointed to find that the ceremony of examination and trial before the magistrate must be held, and George spend a night in a station-house cell before the exchange could be made.

As soon as his own part in the affair was finished, he rode back to the store, and informed Willie that he must curb his impatience until George should be carried up to the prison the next morning.

Having ascertained the exact time when the transfer would be made, Mr. Dates and Willie were punctual at the prison gates the next morning.

They entered just as the van containing the new prisoner came in sight; so they waited just within the gates until it arrived and went in with George. The officer in charge heard



the statement, and after a little examination into the affair ordered an exchange of prisoners.

The keeper who came to conduct them to the cell, looked at George with a fierce scowl. Eddie had not passed these weeks in the prison without doing some good. The keeper had always received gentle replies to his rude words, and once or twice, when Eddie had ventured a remark, he had lingered a few moments to talk, and so learned to like the pleasant-faced boy whose sweet hymns echoed through the corridor so cheerfully in the evening.

Harsh words and rude speeches were reserved for others ; and his glance at George showed that there were some in store for him.

He ordered the boy to proceed in front of him, and nodding to the others to follow, he

stalked along the stone floor, jingling his heavy keys.

"Go, Willie, you deserve it," said Mr. Dates, as the heavy door swung on its hinges.

Willie sprang in, and throwing his arms about Eddie, they laughed and cried together. "Eddie, Eddie, dear boy, you are set free!" he cried, clinging to him.

Eddie uttered a low "Thank God!" and resting one hand on the shoulder of his little friend, reached the other to Mr. Dates, who grasped it firmly.

"My boy, this is hardly unexpected to me," he said; "but I am more rejoiced than I can tell."

"Have you found the money, sir?" asked Eddie.

"Yes, my boy, and there is the thief!"

Eddie started, and looked in the direction

—o-o-g-o—
which Mr. Dates indicated. George stood there, sullen and silent.

Eddie looked at him a moment, and then said, "May his imprisonment teach him as much as mine has taught me, Mr. Dates."

Mr. Dates doubted very much whether such would be the case, as he glanced at the two faces and compared them. "Shall we go now?" he asked Eddie.

Eddie was glad enough to go, and gathered most of the tokens which had been brought to him and placed them in Mr. Dayton's little basket. "I shall want them always, Mr. Dates," he apologized timidly.

Just before he left the cell, he went up to George and took his hand. "I am sorry for you, George," he said, "but if you choose, you need not be unhappy here."

The boy shook his hand off with a muttered curse. Eddie started back: "Oh! don't!" he

cried; "this cell has had so many pleasant voices in it, and the presence of God sometimes," he added, low. "I beg you will not curse here."

He seemed anxious to go after this, and so they went immediately out to the carriage.

"Now, Mr. Dates," asked Eddie, as they started away, "how did you find it out?"

Mr. Dates gave the whole account, and then Eddie, with his eyes full of tears, turned toward his friend, and rested both hands on his shoulders. "O Willie," he said, "my dear friend, how am I ever to thank you?"

"I have had thanks enough this morning, Eddie, and besides, God sent me to find it," he said.

"Where's Minnie?" asked Eddie, a few minutes after, looking out of the window impatiently as they turned into the busy streets.

"Now, Eddie," said Mr. Dates, "I have a



plan formed for you, which I will tell you; and you must not thank me, for it is my own pleasure to do for you. We are going to the store now for a few minutes, and then I am going to take you to my home. There you will find Minnie, whom my mother has learned to love very tenderly; and there I want you to remain with us, and in a week or two go with us to our new home in the country. My dear mother wants you both about her, for her children are all grown up, and she once knew and loved your mother. You need not give up your place in the store immediately. I shall increase Willie's wages to four dollars a week."

"O Eddie," cried Willie, "Mr. Dates' country house is close to my home. Just think of it!"

Eddie could hardly think of anything. Great tears were dropping on his hands, and



he trembled in the presence of the great joy God had given him. He tried to speak, but could not, as he raised the hand held out to him to his lips. One glance at his face would have rewarded any one, and Mr. Dates wished for nothing more.

He had become a little composed when they reached the store, and still holding Willie's hand, he followed Mr. Dates. They went directly to the desk, and when there Mr. Dates touched the spring-bell and called the attention of the clerks. It was about one o'clock, when the store was almost empty of customers, and Mr. Dates, with an apology to those who were present, gave the assembled listeners an account of the morning's discovery.

"I wished to relate all this," he said, as he finished, "in order at once and for ever to clear the boy who stands by my side, and who, through all his imprisonment and false accusa-



tion, has never used a harsh or unkind word towards any one, but saying he waited God's time, has been patient and brave. That is all."

That *was* all of the speech, but not all of Eddie's triumph. The clerks, the cash-boys, and almost every employee of the store came to shake hands with him, and tell him how glad they were to see him back and to know that he was innocent. He received each one with a happy smile and a glad heart; but underneath all was the thought of Minnie and the new glad life which Mr. Dates had promised him, and which he could hardly believe possible. He had a word of deep joy for Willie and of gratitude for his good work. But in his heart was a deeper throb of gratitude to the dear Lord who had led him in wisdom and love. "Thou makest me to lie down in green pastures; thou leadest me be-



side the still waters," sang his glad spirit continually.

"Now, Eddie," said Mr. Dates, coming up to him, "shall we go home to dinner?"

"Home!" The boy's heart throbbed with deep thanksgiving as he looked up towards Mr. Dates with the realization of the new word and the new life, all in his grateful eyes.

The gentleman saw it and it moved him, but he only turned away silently and opened the door for the boy to pass. They walked on, talking of Minnie, and every word made Eddie's heart beat quick and his step bound on the pavement. Presently they stopped before a large stone house, and Mr. Dates led the way up the high steps and opened the door with his latch-key. Bidding Eddie follow, he passed directly up the stairs to his mother's sitting-room, and opening the door, walked in. Mrs. Dates sat in an arm-chair by



the window, reading aloud, and at her feet on a stool was Minnie in a delicate white dress, ruffled and embroidered, while scarlet ribbons at her waist and throat made pretty contrast with her black eyes and clear dark complexion—a most lovely picture to the hungry eyes fastened upon her.

Eddie, startled at first, looked at her as if he could not believe the change; but when she caught the first glimpse of him, she sprang up with a loud cry and threw herself into his arms. He held her closely, kissing her; and it seemed when he let her go, as if he could not drop her hand or have her move away from him.

“I am never to lose you again, Minnie,” he said, fondly. He sat still looking at her, and admiring his pretty little sister in her beautiful dress. It seemed as if he could not take his eyes or his thoughts from her.

"Will you come and speak to my mother, now, Eddie?" said Mr. Dates, gently, seeing that he was still absorbed.

Eddie started up and came forward promptly.

"You will forgive me, Mrs. Dates," he said, with a grace of manner and perfect good-breeding, which at once astonished and charmed the lady. "You can hardly know how glad I was to see Minnie, but I should not have been so forgetful."

"I am very glad to see you, Eddie," replied the lady, "and you need not apologize. But how were you cleared?"

"Mr. Dates found the thief through one of the cash-boys, my friend Willie Gale, and they lost no time in coming for me." He said this with a glance toward Mr. Dates, who stood listening with a pleased smile.

"I tell Eddie, mother, that we must keep him near us, and take him with us to Golden Hill."



"Certainly," returned the pleased mother, "so it shall be."

"Minnie," said Eddie, turning round and calling her to him, "do you hear this?"

"Yes, Eddie, I know. Mrs. Dates told me, but I could not think of it then. Now I can think and talk of it all day long," she said, bringing her hands together gleefully. "The real country, Eddie! You know I never can remember having seen the real country, only the parks."

Eddie looked up from his little sister's face into those of the mother and son. "You have transformed my 'Little Trust' into a fairy," he said, with a grateful sense of their goodness, and a loving pride in his sister. "If mother could see her now, and see us all, I am sure she would be satisfied. As far as Minnie is concerned, I know she is as good as she is beautiful."



"She has been your 'Little Trust' so long," said Mrs. Dates, "that you must let me share her with you. Shall we go down to dinner, now?"

And so it was that "Little Trust" came to be Minnie's name, used whenever she was spoken of by the members of the household.

So Eddie's new life commenced and grew brighter and brighter every day. Mrs. Dates took a wonderful pride in them both. Eddie's dress was made to correspond with Minnie's, and when together it would be difficult to find two lovelier looking children. They were very fond of each other, and Minnie was scarcely ever known to be absent from her brother's side many minutes at a time. It seemed as if their trial had united them in more than common love for each other.

Mrs. Dates was surprised, at first, that they accepted their new position so easily. She



found that there was very little to teach them, for the little forms of manner, speech and dress, which they met now, for the first time, were caught immediately as though they had been always accustomed to them. When, however, Mrs. Dates remembered the gentle refined mother; and saw how her children remembered and treasured her every word, she no longer felt surprised, but only very much gratified.

There was scarcely an hour in the day in which Eddie did not show his pride in his sister, sometimes merely by a fond look following her about the room, sometimes by a word; but oftener, when he saw her pleased and happy with some new thing, which she had never enjoyed before, he would steal away in quiet and thank God for their altered life. For himself, he moved about almost in a dream, coming and going with Mr. Dates, un-



joying every moment as if the happiness could not last.

But the prison-life could not wear away so soon—the weeks of care and trial had been too deeply felt to be forgotten—and sometimes, after a long walk with Mr. Dates, a ride with Mrs. Dates, or a chat and play with Minnie, he would sink back on the sofa and close his eyes, as if to rest. He never complained of feeling tired, and would always spring up when asked if he was not well; but as he rested more and more often, and the games with Minnie grew shorter and shorter, Mrs. Dates looked at her son, and said :

“John, dear, it is time we were in the country.”



IX.

A New Life.

“The heart is so full, that a drop o’er fills it :
We are happy now, because God so wills it.”

PREPARATIONS were now made for leaving town. Mrs. Dates was full of business, ordering furniture, packing glass and silver, and selecting flowers. with which to make her new house a garden all the year round. Eddie, for his part, had some good-by’s to say, and these he saved until a day or two before they left. He took Minnie with him, and they made three calls together.

The first was to their old home in Richmond-
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street. Eddie had been there as soon as he was set at liberty, gathered his things together, and after settling all the indebtedness against him, promised to come again before they left town. Mrs. Woods was standing at the door when they came up. When she saw who they were, she seemed very much pleased, and hurried in to dust some chairs for them. The children held aloof, but Minnie went directly to them, and kissing her little friends, laughed and played as if the old days had come back. No, not quite the same, for by-and-by, when they had bidden good-by to Mrs. Woods, and much to her joy, transferred the little furniture which they owned to her, they climbed the familiar stairs to see if there was anything in the old home which they wanted. Minnie sat down in a chair by the window, and looked towards her brother, who was opening drawers and boxes.



"Eddie," she said, "it does not seem possible that we ever lived here, although it was so short a time ago. How small and low the room is, and how the floor looks, without a carpet! Mrs. Wood's Hattie was so dirty, I couldn't bear to touch her!"

Eddie looked at the little girl a moment, silently, and then came over to her side. "Minnie," he said, smoothing her curls, "my dear sister must remember that if it had not been for the goodness of our Father in Heaven, whom we both love so much, our home would still have been here, and we perhaps no cleaner, or richer, than Hattie Woods; and when Minnie thinks of this room as mean and poor, she must remember that it was our mother's home for many years, and that we must never be ashamed of anything which she had to endure."

He gathered together a few little things



which he thought might serve as mementos of the days which would soon seem strange to them, and then he crept away to Minnie's little closet, and prayed there very earnestly, that God would never let him forget their times of trial, and make him more and more thankful for his altered life every day.

Minnie sat very still after Eddie left her, thinking of the old days, and her mother's face. The room seemed to fade away, and only her mother's form appear, with the patient look, the sad smile, and the soft step, she remembered. She thought of her teachings, her death, and more than all of her sad life ; and she determined, in her childish way, never to do anything which would displease her mother as she looked down upon her little child on earth. So when Eddie came back from his prayer, ready to go, and she turned from the window to meet him, her face



seemed someway changed to that of the lost mother.

"O Minnie," he cried, "it is mother come back!"

"No, Eddie," she replied, with a sweet smile, "it is only little Minnie; but she means to be like mother."

They went down-stairs together, out of the house and out of Richmond-street; and I think, as they turned the corner into the busy street, they were much better prepared for their new life, which might bring them temptation and sorrow, by this half-hour spent in the old room, with thoughts of the lost mother.

Mrs. Wood's children, attracted by Minnie's pretty dress, ran down to the corner to look after them; and Eddie, seeing them, did as his kind, thoughtful heart prompted him, walked on until they were out of sight, before



he put his little sister into the car which took them across the city to Willie's home.

Miss Addie received them very kindly, and took them into the little parlor, where, for a moment, Eddie's step faltered as he remembered the sad hour spent there. Willie was away to the store, but Miss Addie talked to them, gave them a little lunch, and begged them to wait until Willie came home.

So Eddie left Minnie with Miss Addie while he went to make his one other call, upon Mr. Dayton.

The young man was in his counting-room, but he laid aside all his work, and drawing Eddie down to a chair beside him, talked with him for half an hour. Neither alluded to what had passed, but they parted with a firm grasp of the hand, and a strong love for each other; and years after, when Mr. Dayton was an old man, he was heard to say that



many and many a time, when his work for Christ seemed in vain, he had thought of the sad-faced boy whom he had cheered and encouraged when he was not aware of it, and so persevered.

Eddie went down to the store for Willie, and they walked back to the little cottage, where they found Miss Addie and Minnie on the piazza. They all sat there talking until the daylight faded, and they rose to go.

"It is not as if we were not to see each other again," said Willie, as they shook hands. "I shall see you again soon, for in the beginning of October I am to have a little vacation, and Aunt Addie and I are going home. I will see you then."

So there were no farewells spoken after all.

When at length they came home, Eddie sat down in a deep chair, and "rested," as he

called it, that is, sat back with closed eyes, and a face from which all the color had fled.

"Dear Eddie," said Mrs. Dates, coming to him, and pushing his hair back softly, "what can I do for you?"

"Nothing, ma'am, more than you will do to-morrow. Let me rest in the country," replied the boy, acknowledging for the first time that he needed strength.

The next day, just as the setting sun was throwing yellow light over the mountains which enclosed and almost completely shut in the little village of Golden Hill, the cars with a shriek and a snort glided away from the little mountain town, leaving the new comers waiting at the station for their carriage. It was there in a few minutes, and by a long winding up-hill road they came to the beautiful turreted house which had been fitted up for Mrs. Dates by her son. It was perfect in

every respect. Luxury had joined hands with utility and left nothing to be desired. Within and without the house the utmost taste had been displayed; and, better than all, its western windows looked out upon the glorious mountains, constantly changing their beauty as the sun moved over them from east to west.

They gave Minnie a little western room, furnished in blue and hung with pictures which she loved.

"This my room!" she exclaimed, springing into it. "Oh, how pretty! how very pretty!"

She danced about, examining and admiring the room and running to Mrs. Dates at every burst of admiration, to call her attention to some new beauty. Finally she went to the window, threw aside the shutters, and then, with a cry of perfect content, knelt down with her hands folded on the sill. "O Eddie," she said, in a low voice, as her brother came



towards her, "I think this must be Heaven! I never thought of anything so beautiful!"

Truly it was so. The golden hills opposite, with the last gleam of the summer sun resting upon them, were set off in beautiful relief against each other and the brilliant sky, while a small stream at the foot, catching a shadow of the glory, sparkled in the yellow light. A sweet stillness brooded over the scene, only broken by the distant lowing of cows and the chirping of birds just settling themselves to rest. Eddie came to look and admire, but his heart was too full for words; and Mrs. Dates, seeing it, drew him downstairs to tea, knowing that Minnie would not remain long away from him.

"Where is the 'Little Trust?'" asked Mr. Dates, as they came into the tea-room.

"Coming soon," replied his mother. "She has lost herself among the mountains."



She came bounding in after a few minutes, and they gathered around the pretty table with thankful hearts. Eddie was not the only one who responded to Mr. Dates' petition.

"Our Father," he said, "we thank thee for our food and our daily guidance, but more especially that thou hast brought us into a land where thy hand is everywhere, and showered us down thy blessings. May our lives be filled with thy love, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake."

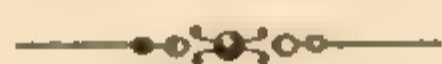
So began the new life which gathered in these two children and protected them from danger and suffering, encompassed them with love and tender care, and led them daily nearer Heaven. To Minnie it was one endless round of delights. She was ever the first of the family astir in the morning, and her foot was never so noiseless as when she crept down



the broad staircase before the rest were awake, and ran out upon the lawn.

After breakfast she and Mrs. Dates walked down the hill with Mr. Dates and Eddie to the gate, where they took the carriage which drove them every morning to meet the cars for the city. They stood at the gate until the whistling train, seen far below, by the river-side, carried their loved ones out of sight, and then they walked back again.

The house was filled with plants, and these Mrs. Dates cared for with her own hands, having Minnie for her quick and constant helper. After their pretty work was over, and a choice boquet gathered for the sewing-room, Mrs. Dates and Minnie sat down there to some simple lessons, which Minnie loved to study and recite, because the teaching was so patient and loving, but more because they never reminded her of the days at the Orphan Home,



and the tasks given without thought, and recited without pleasure. Afterwards there were walks, and rides, and pleasant visits, until late in the afternoon. Then Minnie never failed to go to her western window, throw back the blinds, and drawing a deep chair, station herself there, curled up like a kitten to watch for the coming train. She always had a great book of pictures with her, and after looking at a few, her eyes would wander away to where she could see the railroad track, a bright line in the distance; then back to her book, until it was nearly time for the train, and then, watching and listening, she sat until the whistle started her from her chair and sent her flying down-stairs, hat in hand.

She was at the lawn gate long before the carriage arrived, but there was a little rustic chair where she could wait and rest until the



sound of the fast rolling wheels caused her to spring up and open the gate. One sight of Eddie's glad face, as it grew every day more happy and peaceful, was enough to reward her for any trouble: and Mr. Dates was sure to lift her into the carriage, to kiss her, and ask, "How is the 'Little Trust?'"

There was tea afterwards in the flower-decked room, pleasant talk and laughter on the piazza, while the warm air lingered, and music when the curtains were drawn. At nine o'clock they had worship, and with the precious words of prayer still in her mind, Minnie went off up-stairs to her little western room, where the young moon visited her, and the birds waked her in the morning.

She always asked God to take care of her as she knelt beside her own little bed, and afterwards she repeated the Lord's Prayer, because it reminded her of the day at the



“Home,” when Eddie and she had learned to say “Our Father.” She had learned to love the Lord Jesus while sitting at Maggie’s bedside at the Home, and now she was becoming more like her mother every day, for she was “growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

After she had placed her head upon her pillow, gentle hands would touch her, and her adopted mother’s voice say, “Is my darling comfortable?” and then with a kiss she was left to sleep. It was a real, beautiful life, and when the memory of the painful days came in upon it, it was as something afar off and gone, and only her mother’s face remained clear and distinct. *That* never faded.

To Eddie the change was just as wonderful, and the joy just as great as to Minnie ; but in a different way—a higher, holier way, as he had suffered more than she. It was a great



thing to him to go to town every morning: and bidding Mr. Dates good-morning at the store door, run off with his armful of books to the school where he was studying so hard. It was a great privilege to be able to study all day long, and learn constantly more and more, and then return to the store just in time to have a few minutes' chat with Willie, and then home again by the swift train, which carried them away among the golden hills and gave them free, pure air, and the fresh green earth to feast their eyes upon. It was always a pleasure to see the boy's face change and his eyes sparkle, as his little sister, growing more winning every day, sprang toward the carriage as they drove up. The home life satisfied Eddie's every want: and his face was happy and contented. He liked nothing better than to sit down by the table in the library, on a rainy evening, with Minnie near him, and



spreading his books all about him, work away at his tasks. It was rather a help than a hindrance when the little girl's soft fingers crept into his now and then, to take away his pencil, or a beseeching voice said: "Eddie, please stop a moment, and look at dolly!"

Eddie never forgot the old life—it never grew dim or far off. He rarely crossed the street opposite the prison without thinking of his sad life there; he never saw one of the Richmond-street faces that he did not sigh and turn away. He never heard the children at play in the Orphan Home without stopping a moment, as he used to do, to try and distinguish a voice like Minnie's among them. He never stopped before the cashier's desk at the store when he did not think of the evening when he stood there accused and suspected; and as he opened his Bible night and morning, he never did so without thinking of the mother



to whom the little volume had been so dear.

The boy's face had changed ; it was bright and sunny now, and his laugh rang out musically and often : but when he sat studying, or when he came in from a lonely walk, his face would be touched with the grave lines of care and trouble which they had once known so well. His room, close to Minnie's, so that he could often hear her footsteps, was a cosy, bright little place, which he had furnished and ornamented to please himself. He spent many happy hours there, but he never sought it at night without looking out of the window and thinking of another place, very small and lonely, where the stars looked in upon guilt. Living so, with these thoughts constantly with him, made him none the less happy or cheerful ; only as often as they came to him, another thought came with them, and his



almost hourly prayer was that God would make him thankful enough, and send unnumbered blessings upon the kind friends whom He had sent to the orphans in their need.

So, if he grew every day more gentle and loving, more bound up in the service of Mr. Dates, more devoted to his new mother, above all more desirous of pleasing his Heavenly Master, it was because his one thought was thankfulness.

To his "Little Trust"—whom he held sacredly as such, although he knew her safe in older and wiser hands than his—he was the only perfect being on earth, the one who stood to her in the place of every one but God.

Mr. and Mrs. Dates watched anxiously the two children whom they had taken in their hearts, fearing that the new life might disclose some qualities which they might regret; but as week after week passed, and their progress



only made them lovelier and better, they ceased to fear or suspect evil in them, and enjoyed to the full the merry voices, the light footsteps, and the loving attention which the brother and sister vied with each other in bestowing.

Before the weather grew cold, when the October days were still pleasant, and while the trees in their scarlet dress were "beautiful upon the mountains," Willie Gale and Aunt Addie came down to Golden Hills for a visit to Willie's home. Eddie brought the news of their arrival one evening, when he came from the city, and Mrs. Dates, who had heard the story of Aunt Addie's kindness, walked down the hillside, with Minnie, the next day, and called at the farm-house. The large, neatly kept farm pleased her, and the bright, rustic-looking children made a continual picture of rural beauty, as they ran in and out or climbed the piazza steps.



Aunt Addie, in her graceful way, made her welcome, and Willie, with a timid awe of his employer's mother, came and shook hands silently. Not so silently, however, with Minnie, whom he carried off immediately into the pretty group of brothers and sisters, all younger than he.

Mrs. Dates' eyes followed Minnie anxiously, fearful, for the last time, that the notice she daily received, the difference which wealth, alas ! always makes, and even her own personal beauty, might cause her to draw back from the group among whom Willie led her.

You may cease looking, Mrs. Dates ! You have nothing to fear. The little girl had her lesson one day, not long ago, in Richmond-street. There is a higher Hand than yours leading her.

Minnie stopped a moment, with the wondering eyes of the children fixed upon her,

and then suddenly her brother's words recurred to her: "If it had not been for the goodness of our Father in Heaven our home would still have been in Richmond-street." It was an instant's thought, an instant's action, and then she sat down among the children, and in five minutes was the centre of admiration in the laughing group. Mrs. Dates turned to Miss Addie with a look of great satisfaction. This first visit led to many others among the children, and between the two ladies. There were chestnutings, and long walks, visits to the farm-house and to the mansion during the few bright weeks of their stay; and the happy voices and the childish steps about the turreted house lulled Mrs. Dates, as she sat in her room, like sweet music.

One Sunday—the last of Aunt Addie's stay—they all went to the little village church together. Mrs. Dates and Minnie rode down



and called at the farm-house for Aunt Addie and Willie, while Mr. Dates and Eddie walked down the hill, and over the bridge to the little church on the side of the mountain. A detention at the farm caused the walkers to reach the church in advance of the rest, and Eddie was sitting in the end of the pew when they came in. He rose, hastily, to let them pass, detaining Minnie, who was even lovelier than usual. She wore a white dress, a scarlet sack richly embroidered in white, and a pretty gypsy hat with a long scarlet plume, which swayed to and fro, just touching now and then the fresh beautiful face beneath it. Eddie was never so proud as when he had her in her prettiest by his side. He was thinking of her, patting her hand up and down upon his, when the voice of the minister, speaking for the first time, made him lift his eyes quickly.

God's child

A New Life.

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Surely he had heard that voice, and seen that face somewhere! He struggled a moment to remember, and then came a sure recollection of the Orphan Home chapel, the great picture above the organ, a little girl in a thread-bare cloak and faded bonnet, and a voice repeating: "Oh! that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men."

It was the same minister who had preached to the children at the Home at the first service which he attended, and the wonderful difference between the two days, and an overwhelming gratitude for the present, made him clasp the little gloved hand closer, and look down into the up-turned face with eyes clouded with joyful tears.

As long as the voice was heard the memory lingered, and the text on that first Sunday was repeated mentally many times that morning



by the grateful boy. He thought of the way in which God had led them out of the shadow into the light, until it seemed as if life was not long enough to serve that Saviour whose love is beyond knowledge, and who never forsakes his own. He was still thinking of this as he stood by the carriage steps after service, holding Minnie's hand and waiting for the ladies, who lingered.

“Minnie,” he said, gravely, “did you recognize that gentleman who preached this morning?”

“I thought I had seen him before or heard his voice. Who was it Eddie?”

“Do you remember the first Sunday at the Home?”

The little girl nodded, flushing, and moved her foot in its scarlet shoe to and fro in the sand. “I knew I had seen him somewhere,” she said.



"Is it not good to remember, sometimes, Minnie," he asked, "when God has been so good to us?"

The eyes fixed upon the shoes, lifted themselves suddenly. "Do you remember the day when you told me of the little girl whom you saw with her mother; and how I wished for the scarlet shoes she wore, and then cried because I could never have a mother, as she had? God has almost given me another mother, Eddie. We will remember the old days and be grateful to the dear Lord whom we love."

"Not only with our lips, dear, but with our lives, so we will," replied Eddie, with a sweet smile, as he lifted her into the carriage.

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